

# Geschichte des Distriktes XIV

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# History of District XIV

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# l'histoire du District XIV

Irene Wiese-v. Ofen

1962-2016

## **Dr.-Ing. Irene Wiese- von Ofen**

District 29 Historian and CAC Chair 2012-2014, 2014 -2016, 2016-2018  
Zonta International Foundation Vice President 2005-2007

# **ZONTA International: District XIV History 1962-1994**

## **1. The beginning of ZONTA International**

ZONTA International, founded 1919 in United States, first arrives Europe with the founding of the Clubs in Vienna, Austria, in 1930 and in Hamburg, Germany, 1931. In 1935 the organisation reaches Scandinavia with founding Stockholm, Sweden. The expansion stagnated during World War II, with only private personal contacts remaining between club members. After the war ZONTA grew rapidly: Bern, Switzerland (1948), London, UK (1949), Paris, France (1950), Munich, Germany (1952). By 1989 Zonta was established in 15 European countries, and 5 more countries founded clubs after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1994, at the division of District XIV, there were 240 European clubs.

This tells us a story of mutual friendship, reconciliation and stabilisation after the damages of the war, increasing engagement in local and international service and empowerment of competent professional women in business and public life. The objectives of ZONTA International were not only attractive for European women. South America, Australia, Africa and Asia followed in the last 60 years. During the same time Europe developed into 8 districts representing more than half of the worldwide members with active leadership at all international levels, boards and committees.

## **2. ZONTA goes Europe after World War II**

ZONTA's tradition was to appoint a SOM-Club to allow experienced Zontians to mentor and support newly founded clubs in their organisation. This principle secures that the ZONTA spirit as well as the implementation of rules and participation in the ZONTA life is understood in a new club community. According to this custom new clubs non-districted for a longer period. So in Europe - for the newly founded clubs - European meetings were organised as "Joint Middle and Northern Europe Conferences" in Paris 1957, Copenhagen 1959, Vienna 1961. But the number of members grew rapidly, therefore it was decided 1962 to split Europe and establish District XIII for northern and District XIV for central and southern Europe.

District XIV grew quickly, because of the great potential in countries like France and Germany. Advanced women, highly qualified in business and public life, committed themselves to the ideas of advancing the status of women and advocating for women's rights

Beyond national boundaries ZONTA International offered the inspiring experience of worldwide contacts at Conventions, built bridges by friendship Districts and friendship Clubs, invitations to open houses and ZONTA tours. Women were united in these years in the ideals of friendship, based on integrity and personal commitment. Besides that it was important, that ZONTA was an organisation of professional women. At that time the European societies were traditionally organised in family structures of stay-at-home-mothers and working fathers with less support in child care services.

Creating a female spirit of sovereignty, equality and solidarity was attractive for women in post-war Western Europe when ZONTA began to grow rapidly in the sixties up to the eighties.

Years later similar discussions arose for women in Eastern European countries after the wall had fallen- although the rate of working women was much higher- but mostly not because of their personal decision- economic constraints and authoritarian regimes had often forced them.

### **3. ZONTA District XIV**

When established 1962 District XIV encompassed 27 clubs in 7 countries: Austria 1, France 3, Germany 11, Iran 1, Italy 1, Switzerland 9, UK 1. The District grew quickly with highly engaged Governors and with Area Directors from different European nationalities united in the ZONTA spirit.

In the year of division 1994, District XIV encompassed about 240 clubs, including 18 clubs organized in eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Russia, Croatia, Ukraine) with nearly 7.000 members.

During the first 30 years countries like France, Germany and Italy were the European core group. Switzerland and The Netherlands followed. Austria, Greece, United Kingdom (ZI counted for long time England and Scotland as two countries) had as middle sized countries not so much Clubs, but concerning European officers they were equal in rights to serve as well as in using their influence - one area (mostly one country, sometimes two countries) – one vote. Between the years 1963 to 1994 countries like Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Israel joined ZONTA and belonged to D XIV. Portugal had one Club during 1971-1986. Iran started with Teheran 1963, and expanded to three clubs, ended by the Persian Revolution 1979. Being close to the Shah family most of the Zontians migrated to western countries. The club in Istanbul, Turkey, was as well part of D XIV, but in the eighties, when the country was under military control, money transfer and traveling was impossible. At that time D XIV supported the club financially and by personal contacts (I remember a visit in 1980). Finally after ten years a reinstallation of the club was made in 1991.

Cairo, belonging to District XVIII from 1980-1988, requested a redistricting to D XIV. That was accepted at the District Conference in Brighton 1988. The second Club Giza in Egypt had difficulties of getting a license, therefore, although Headquarter had a charter number in the files, the club of Giza was not officially chartered in Egypt. But the club of Giza was invited officially to all D XIV Board meetings. Both clubs had difficulties to transfer money and to follow rules of election and rotation as written in the ZONTA Bylaws. Despite many support efforts of D XIV, Cairo was disbanded 1995.

In Israel, the club of Tel Aviv was established in 1990 and the one in Haifa 1991 (Jerusalem in organisation). Many of these clubs, not officially members of the district, were invited and participated in D XIV life, were supported mentally and often economically and felt as if belonging to D XIV.

These multilateral relations, historically not without conflicts, but mutual accepted in the large European District, were important concerning the division processes for the new districts.

#### **4 .Life in District XIV**

In the first 20 to 30 years, the mental reconciliation and nurturing of mutual respect and understanding between the countries - formerly opposed in World War II (and later Cold War) - was an important part in the work of District XIV. In this spirit, the district was dedicated to the development of a democratic and peaceful commonwealth of European countries.

ZONTA supported this efforts by initiatives to connect a new generation of qualified European women across the whole continent. A generation which was influenced not only by national ideas but also by pan-European and international participation, and experiences grew up influenced by ZONTA's ideals of women's rights and democratic structures, and was thus able to allow Zontians to have an impact on public opinion, whereas vice versa European Zontians influenced ZONTA International in thinking and reflexions.

Concerning service District XIV was strongly participating in the ZONTA international service projects .During the first years one international project was for displaced persons in Wuppertal and the Anne-Frank Village in Oberhausen, both in Germany. In the fifties the support for refugees in the Middle East and enabling girls to go to school in Ramallah were projects close to European members own experience with wartime and destroyed life opportunities. In the eighties and nineties the war in the Balkan war brought the conflicts nearer to District XIV. The German Area collected enough money to build a shelter in Zagreb for female survivors of rape and orphans care.

A strong initiative to care for orphans and the beginning of programs concerning aids protection in African cuntries were initiated in France. Care France was a strong partner to ZONTA.

The international project to eradicate trafficking from eastern countries to the west was another international service project that generated a lot of empathy in Europe.

But District XIV was as well strongly involved Asian international service programs as: pure drinking water in India, access to education for the girl child in South Africa, health centre in Guatemala, vaccine program in Nepal, and many different violence-against-women programs in countries of South America, like working with Mapuche Indian Women in Chile.

More and more European Zontians understood that advocating for Women's rights and help to end violence against women is a necessity to support and uplift half of the world's population – who are women. Cooperation with UN increased and ZONTA grew to be THE major donor to UNIFEM (today UN WOMEN). In this context Europeans learned to organise non- profit events and sponsoring.

Local service of the individual club varies vastly in the different European countries. Despite cultural differences the majority of the European Clubs are involved in social and educational programs dedicated to give chances to young women, supporting female artists, migrants and other assistance programs. Violence against women was one of the important themes to connect international with local service programs. Giving beneficial concerts for elderly or organising food care for refugees or homeless persons, training in language, professional help for unemployed youngsters were organised by the clubs. But as well highly skilled young women were continuously uplifted and the international YWPA- JMK- and AE- Awards were successfully implemented at Club, Area and District level.

Through the years the clubs developed a tradition of cultural as well as touristic exchange, thanks to the attractive locations within the district. A united European feeling, fostered by the 10 Area-Directors, to serve local, national and international through all 13 countries belonging to D XIV, developed.

District XIV was the first to organise a Convention in Europe in 1976 in Wiesbaden, Germany.

To show the huge variety of Europe united in the ZONTA International spirit was the predominant intention of the District members offering this experience to Zontians from all over the world.

## **5. Transformation of District XIV**

Since the end of the seventies, concerning the rapid growth in western and south Europe, there were rumours about dividing the large and powerful district, especially if compared with the other districts around the world with mostly 20 to 30 clubs in a district. The comparable unit would have been an area in Europe. Supplementary areas in Europe mostly included one country and an own language, so that the challenges and responsibilities of an Area Director in District XIV were more to be compared with a Governor in other Districts than with the tasks and responsibilities of an Area Director in USA for example. Therefore in Europe Area Directors were elected, got an own budget and had formal Area Meetings. Sometimes the area had national or own international service projects. The Area Directors took over the duties of visiting the clubs and trained the presidents. So, in Europe arose a structure with an own character, and ZONTA International had to decide on structural continuity or innovation.

In 1988 a task force was implemented by the International President Ruth Walker to develop ideas for dividing District XIV. Members of the task force were the then Governor District XIV Norma Turbet, UK, the then Lieutenant Governor Irene Wiese-von Ofen, D, and the Past International President Harriette Jeckel, USA. The discussions went on high intellectual level, but till 1990 no results were achieved. Additionally a new problem raised with the fall of the Berlin wall and the big interest and many initiatives to establish new clubs in Eastern Europe. The first existing 2 clubs and the 10 next clubs organised in Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary, not including 5 new clubs in unified Eastern Germany, showed clearly that District XIV got a dimension, that would have an impact on the whole ZONTA organisational structure. Either ZONTA changes in generally in bigger units – in which case Europe could be a model –, or ZONTA would continue within its existing structure – in which case District XIV would be divided and follow the dimensions of the other worldwide districts in ZONTA.

At the Convention in Dallas 1990 therefore the then Governor Irene Wiese-von Ofen was asked to develop procedures for a division in cooperation with her Board and the affected clubs in District XIV.

Possible models and their impact on clubs, budget, service and procedures were developed by the District XIV Board and given to the clubs for discussion and decision. A final proposal was presented at the District Conference in Essen 1991 and unanimously defeated by the delegates who wanted to continue the multicultural District XIV, especially considering the fact that after the end of the cold war the women of the Eastern European countries wanted to “return” to Europe and that any division might reopen old European conflicts.

However, according to the bylaws, the International Board has the power, in case there is no agreement, to implement new boundaries for districts and areas. Therefore Governor Irene

Wiese-von Ofen, after intensive consultation with the International President Leneen Forde and the International Board, proposed a procedure in preparing new proposals for a possible division, based on discussions and decisions in her District XIV Board. And based on certain criteria.

Her visits and consultations with non-central European clubs and her experience as Governor was especially relevant in developing these criteria. (see appendix.)

This was accepted by the International Board.

Governor Cornelia Klauser-Reucker, at her last District-Conference in Lausanne 1993, finalised by elections of five new Governors and their Boards the necessary procedures. Process and result of the division of 1994 have a veritably, strong impact on the new districts till nowadays.

In the following years each new district began to develop new strategies, based on old experiences and friendship relations, founded new clubs in their new boundaries, implemented solidarity funds for new established Eastern clubs, organised following two Inter-District-Conferences, began with own District Conferences and implemented with the European Seminars a special format following one of the division criteria to continue with cross-border meetings. These European Seminars are existing till today.

Those countries, which had been divided in more than on district like France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany implemented cooperation with national women's organisation in order to be able to support or influence national legal procedures, be present in hearings and eager in advocating. (France e.g. in order to support a campaign against Female Genital Mutilation, Germany in order to amend a law against prostitutions)

It would be too big an endeavour for this paper to present more than short examples of the rich and diverse offers of activities of all lively clubs. Zontians, integrated in local responsibilities, feel as part of International ZONTA, especially if their district is international and they join District Conferences and International Conventions. The face to face and cross-cultural encounters with women from around the world remain fascinating and enriching. Mutual contacts permit a lot of new experiences and cooperative learning – a permanent ZONTA quality!

Through these years in District XIV we all became representatives and part of ZONTA's goal "working together to advance the status of women through service and advocating", which is an ongoing process. We Europeans learned from conflicts and have to continue in this process of balancing and overcoming conflicts - this experience of fifty years District XIV might be seen as a lab. The old District XIV and the following five Districts 14, 27, 28, 29, 30 in about 20 years offer character which allows explorations into learning to overcome conflicts, respect for cultural and historical diversity and living in various languages and economic disparities, being aware of the fact, that privileged living condition are fragile. But we are learning to respect diversity – and diversity is the biggest treasure that ZONTA has to offer.

## Appendix 1

### **District Conferences and Governors**

The following District and Inter-District Conferences took place between 1963 and 1993:

- 1963 Hamburg, D, Governor 1961-1963 Helene Jenni, Basel, CH
- 1965 Bern, CH, Governor 1963-1965 France de la Chaise –Mutin, Paris, F
- 1967 Helsinki, Interdistrict Conference XIII/XIV, Governor 1965-1967 Adda Sieveking, Hamburg, D
- 1969 London UK, Governor 1967-1969 Nancy Philips, London, UK
- 1971 Rotterdam, NL, Interdistrict Conference XIII /XIV, Gov. 1969-1972 Beatrix Kemp, Vienna, AT
- 1973 Basel, CH, Governor 1972-1974 Danielle Bridel, Bern, CH
- 1975 Malmö, S, Interdistrict Conference XIII/XIV, 1974-1976 Governor Clara Missiroli-Covi, Milano, I
- 1977 Vichy, F, Governor 1976-1978 Irène Bellicard, Lyon, F
- 1979 San Remo, I, Interdistrict Conference XIII/XIV, Gov. 1978-80 Bernardine Haringsma, Rotterdam NL
- 1981 Bruxelles, B, Governor 1980 -1982 Ursula Scheid, Berlin, D,
- 1983 Copenhagen, DK, Interdistrict Conference XIII/XIV Gov. 1982-1984 Mary Mavromati, Athens, G
- 1985 Athens, G, Governor 1984-1986 Mimy Raemdonck, Bruxelles, B
- 1987 Innsbruck, AT, Governor 1986-1988 Maria Carla Crippa Mosca, Milano, I
- 1989 Brighton, UK, Governor 1988-1990 Norma Turbett, Oxford, UK
- 1991 Essen, D, Governor 1990-1992 Irene Wiese - von Ofen, Essen, D
- 1993 Lausanne, CH, Governor 1992 -1994 Cornelia Klauser-Reucker, CH

## Appendix 2

### **Criteria of Division of District XIV**

Governor Irene Wiese-von Ofen and her Board with Lt. Governor Cornelia Klauser-Reucker and 10 Area-Directors proposed 1992 to the International Board a possible division by using the following criteria:

1. No national districts. The "European Internationality" is a crucial element of a lively ZONTA world in Europe,
2. Big countries are necessarily be divided into two, three or even more (Germany 5) parts,
3. No division between France and Germany after the reconciliation between those two countries, after centuries of various wars and especially the second world war,
4. No division that would encompass only eastern countries because of the needed solidarity of the western club /countries with those countries,
5. No division between northern and southern countries in Europe concerning cultural and/or economic reasons (see discussion in Italy and Greece),
6. No Districts with conflicting constellation because of the European history ( e.g. to follow wishes like Turkey and Greece not to be in one district, the same with Egypt and Israel, to offer Poland and Czech Republic to choose, in which district they want to stay - the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Poland decided for Germany, Russia one club for France and one club for Germany, Hungary for Austria, the Baltic countries for Finland and Sweden),
7. Diversity in languages are not to be taken as barriers,
8. Distances are to be compared to other continents in the ZONTA world, that means they are not relevant in division models,
9. For the divided countries national cooperation models/institutional unions should be allowed to be implemented because of necessary participation in national legal procedures and advocacy,
10. Inter-District-Conferences and European Seminars should be organised in the future because of the necessary communication between the European Zontians and Zontians of one country, now in different districts, as well as for continuing the post war European spirit of supporting peace and stimulating initiatives with relevance for all Zontians of a country belonging to different districts.



## Appendix 3

### **Interdistrict and European/ Weekend Seminars**

Interdistrict and weekend seminars are meetings in various countries of Europe, discussing ZONTA themes as well as worldwide passionate women topics. Their origin is to continue with the post war European spirit of overcoming conflicts and competition, and strengthen the ideals of ZONTA for peace and understanding, high professional input and mutual trust and respect in diversity and freedom.

These Seminars/ Meetings took place:

- 1995 San Remo, Interdistrict Conference of the 5 Districts, with own District meetings included
- 1997 Wien, Interdistrict Conference for four Districts, D 29 began a separate District Conference
- 1994, 1997, 2000, 2007 Inter-Club Seminars in Burg Ludwigstein, Germany
- 1995 International Seminar for Europe in Lübeck, Germany
- 2002 European Seminar in Stuttgart, Germany
- 2004 Weekend D 29 Seminar Königstein/Frankfurt ,Germany
- 2006 Weekend D 29 Seminar in Bonn,Germany
- 2009 European Seminar in Bonn, Germany
- 2011 European Seminar in Bonn, Germany
- 2013 European Seminar in Tampere, Finland
- 2015 European Seminar in Brügge, Belgium
- 2017 European Seminar in Vienna, Austria

Those countries belonging to different, more than one district like France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany implemented the cooperation with national women's organisation for being able in supporting or influencing legal procedures, hearings and other initiatives that are of relevance in advocating ZONTA positions in national activities. (France for instance with a Circumcision campaign in relation to the International Service project, Germany with amending divorce laws and laws against prostitution, Italy in cooperation with the Women's Lobby in Brussels, etc.)

These national Unions of ZONTA Clubs are optional, but with strong relationship to ZONTA International. Delegates on Club-, Area- and District-level to this diverse unions, officially elected as representatives of Zonta, are working together with these national institutions /NGO's for the benefit of common efforts. They support cooperation with the ZONTA Representatives at the European Parliament as well as at UN Institutions in Paris, Geneva and Vienna like UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UN Women.

## Appendix 4

### **History of District XIV (1963-1994)**

Areas and countries in the years of division 1992-1994

<b>District XIV encompasses up to 1990 the following Areas:</b>	<b>1990-1992</b>	<b>1992-1994</b>
01 Austria	Czech Republic 1991, Hungary 1991, Slovakia 1992	Croatia 1994
02 Belgium		Luxembourg 1993
03 France	Russia 1991	
04 Germany	Czech Republic 1991, Poland 1991	Ukraine 1992/93
05 Greece		
6 Ireland		
07 Italy		Princ. Monaco 1994
08 The Netherlands		
(09 Portugal 1971-1982)	Egypt 1980-1989 in D XVIII, since 1989 in DXIV	
10 Switzerland and Liechtenstein		
11 United Kingdom (England and Scotland)		
12 Turkey 1963 – 1980	Reinstalled 1991 Israel 1991	

Till 1994, when divided, D XIV had 10 elected Area Directors 1990-1992 / 1992- 1994 (see the following list )

and three Representatives for Egypt, Turkey and Israel (invited to Board-Meetings or only included in District communication lines and visits, participation to District Conferences )

## Appendix 5

### **Area Director in DXIV 1990-1992 and 1992-1994**

#### Area 01 Austria 13 Clubs

AD 1990 - 1992 Edda Reiner, ZC Graz  
AD 1992 - 1994 Inge Prokop, ZC Klagenfurt

#### Area 02 Belgium 14 and Luxembourg 1 Club

AD 1990 - 1992 Josette Hecht, ZC Brüssel II  
AD 1992 - 1994 Claire de Somer - Vergote, ZC Brügge

#### Area 03 France 34 Clubs

AD 1990 - 1992 Monique Candeau, ZC Aix en Provence  
AD 1992 - 1994 Nicole Herb, Paris III

#### Area 04 Germany 71 Clubs

AD 1990 - 1992 Ingrid Karutz , ZC Bad Homburg v.d.Höhe  
AD 1992 - 1994 Ingrid Gräfin zu Solms-Wildenfels, ZC Bad Soden – Kronberg

#### Area 05 Greece 6 Clubs

AD 1990 - 1992 Vicky Papuis, ZC Athens  
AD 1992 - 1994 Lila Michael, ZC Athens

#### Area 06 Ireland 2 Clubs

AD 1990 - 1992 Mary Towers, ZC Dublin  
AD 1992 -1994 Audrey Lawler, ZC Limmerick-Shannon

#### Area 07 Italy 35 Clubs and Principauté de Monaco 1 Club

AD 1990 - 1992 Lindsay Renzulli-Philipp, ZC Bari  
AD 1990 -1992 Dr .Angela Tessara, ZC Aosta

#### Area 08 The Netherlands 18 Clubs

AD 1990 - 1992 Idy Casparie-van Velsen, ZC Zwolle  
AD 1992 - 1994 Regina Smit, ZC Utrecht

#### Area 09 Former Portugal, 1990 -1992 and 1992 -1994 Egypt and Israel 4 Clubs

Representative 1990 -1992 Bothaina Omara, ZC Giza  
Representative 1994 Yael Rom , ZC Haifa

#### Area 10 Switzerland and Liechtenstein 16 Clubs

AD 1990 - 1992 Eva Michaelis, ZC Bern  
AD 1992 - 1994 Claudine Rosselet, ZC Neuchatel

#### Area 11 United Kingdom 5 Clubs

AD 1990 – 1992 Joan Millington, ZC Oxford  
AD 1992 - 1994 Dolina Morrison, ZC Aberdeen

#### Area 12 Turkey 1 Club

Representative Susan Akpinar, ZC Istanbul

## Appendix 6

### **District XIV was in charge of the nondistricted Clubs in Eastern Countries**

18 Clubs founded or in organisation between 1990-1994

Czech Republic 4 Clubs

ZC Prag- Bomemia, Prag City, Nachod (to D 28) Ceske Budejovice, (to D 14)

Croatia 1 Club

ZC Zagreb (to D 14)

Hungary 3 Clubs

ZC Szombathely, Budapest, Vezprem, (to D 14)

Poland 3 Clubs,

ZC Warsaw, Krakow, Gdansk, (to 27)

Russia 5 Clubs

Moscow I, Moscow II, St.Petersburg, St.Petersburg Nawa, Borovichi ( to D 29)

Slovakia 1 Club

ZC Bratislava (to 14)

Ukraine 1 Club

ZC Lviv (to D 27)

(Later Ushgorod and Odessa (to D 27)

*After the division the clubs stayed in the Areas, where they had been accompanied and where trustfulness developed, so that integration in the new Districts was without problems.*

District XIV counted 240 Clubs, governed by one Governor, 10 Area Directors and 3 Representatives in 1994, the year of division.

The whole District comprised 222 Clubs in 15 countries and took care of 18 Clubs, non yet districted, but already established and in final organisation, in 7 countries.