

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Notes of the 28th Plenary Meeting of Inter Country Committees held at the Hilton Hotel Strasbourg on Saturday March 31st 2007 with President Jose Carlos Estorninho in the chair

Together with the Executive Council and National Coordinators from Zones 10-18, there were 41 Rotarians one Rotaractor present, representing 14 countries,. A Partners' Programme was arranged by Ursula Laurent.

President Jose Carlos Estorninho opened the First Session at 9.15 am and welcomed the assembled company.

1st VP Serge Gouteyron was the first speaker, talking of the RI Board and the Manual of Procedure. He reiterated his speech given at the Istanbul Institute, concentrating on explaining how ICC procedures have been progressed with information given to the RI Board. Our Workshops this afternoon would clarify and deepen our approach.

He gave a short resume of the history of ICCs: the first committee being formed between Germany and France in 1950. Rotarians had already contributed to the creation of UNESCO in 1943 and to the editing of the UN Charter a San Francisco in 1945. International organisations were now looking to establish a durable peace.

Rotarians wanted to have a direct participation in this project.

There are about 180 ICCs in Europe, Africa and the Near East: all dedicated to peace and international understanding.

As RI had little idea of the aims and objects of this organisation, Clubs in France, Turkey and Germany presented a Resolution to the Council on Legislation in 2004.

This received a favourable vote of 84%.

The Board approved in several ways:

recognising the work already done by ICCs

asking the Secretary General of RI to put information about the ICCs on the RI Website

asking the Secretary General to mention the activities of ICCs in 'Rotarian' and 'Rotary World'

asking ICC Chairmen to tell the Secretary General of their successes

encouraging Rotary Leaders to include information about the ICCs in their Training Programmes at the International Assembly, at Institutes, at District Conferences etc.

Many people have pointed out to Serge that, since the Board has recognised the ICCs and their impact, the size of their mention in the Manual of Procedure has halved!

This is explained by the fact that there was a delay in the writing and printing of the Manual and the delay between the CoL and the meeting of the Board.

In the next Manual of Procedure we hope to have the Charter of the Executive Council and National Coordinators as approved by the Strasbourg meeting of 2004.

ICC information should be permanently displayed on the RI Website.

Also the Resolution as proposed by the Istanbul Institute – (following the ICC meeting held there) –

The Board encourages countries throughout the world, by means of new communications technology, to make relationships between distant countries possible.

The Board requests the general secretary to work with Director Balkan and past RI Vice President Serge Gouteyron to revise the Rotary Code of Policies section 36.030.

based on the guidelines for ICCs in Exhibit C-9-b, to be presented to the Board at its June 2007 meeting.

Serge ended by expressing his satisfaction on three counts

a) He organised with 2 Board colleagues a North American Information Seminar on ICCs at Montreal in October 2005

b) Welcoming here Jon Eiche, President of the American association of the 'Friends of Russia' which will become an ICC USA/Russia next June, with the charter being given at a special gathering at Evanston

c) There will be a Presidential Conference by President Wilf Wilkinson, with the participation of ICCs, at Cannes on March 28-29 2008 - theme - 'Peace is Possible'

Finance

Treasurer Herve stated that our Finances were in good order and asked that NCs pay any dues outstanding – 80 Euros per District.

DG Claude Sarric (1680) also welcomed us: he was sorry that there fewer present than expected but remarked upon the quality of those here. He was Chairman of the ICC France with relations with China, Mauritania and Birkin Faso – so he was converted to ICCs and wished us a successful day of deliberations and in the Workshops.

Salt Lake City Convention

Bernard Daum would have help from Robert Heline, Ray Hartman and Jon Eiche. Booth No 2509. Aim is to attract visitors and talk Inter Country Committees.

Reports from New Coordinators

Jon Eiche expressed his pleasure at being with us. Setting up the ICC with Russia had been impossible until a separate Russian District (2220) had been chartered.

Several US Districts, some representatives from Japan and 3 from Australia plus DG Andre Danilenko decided to resurrect the concept of an ICC Russia/USA.

Jon represents 10 Districts in the US which are in favour of an ICC, they make 20% of the USA, in 4 Zones. He is very grateful to have been invited to this meeting. His thanks to Serge and Robert Heline who have helped him to create an ICC based on the European model. He works closely with Gian Carlo Marelllo, now one of his closest friends. Jon will be actively supporting the Salt Lake City Booth.

Andrzej Lubek said he was honoured to be here. He is a DG from Warsaw, 2230 covering Poland, Belarus and Ukraine with 100 million people. It is a very large area to administer and there are many differences in these three countries: Poland is a member of the EU: the others are undergoing many changes. There are 4 principal languages and the distance between Poland and the Ukraine is some 2000 kms.

They have 122 clubs. Poland had Rotary in the 1930s but from 1939 there was none for 50 years. In 1989 clubs started again in Hungary, Czech/Slovak Republics and Poland. There are now 5 clubs in Belarus, 40 in Ukraine and 75 in Poland.

They have ICCs within the District. They designate smaller regions for training and meetings. At the end of March there were 13 ICCs.

Activities – they help clubs to find partner clubs and supervise Grants. They arrange Student Exchanges, but not the official RI type. This project is now 10 years old and works with Districts 1940 & 1950 – doctors, journalists etc.

Hartmut Brie – The Structure of ICCs and Nomenclature

National ICCs should meet at Strasbourg – but Scandinavia, Holland, RIBI do not attend – why not?

This is a meeting of the National Coordinators who represent ICCs at this level.

There are 2 categories – ICCs long established friendship meeting once a year.

There is another which works with Third World countries to create and organise projects but cannot meet annually because of the distance and costs involved.

People with the appropriate skills are needed to play an active part in developing these projects.

Advantage 1

These are the committees which should meet and elect someone from their ranks as President of the Executive Committee: someone who knows the inherent problems.

At the moment, there are Past District Governors (PDGs) elected who have little relevant knowledge. Coordinators should coordinate, not re-orientate, the structure and aims which the ICC has followed enthusiastically over a period of years.

Advantage 2

These two kinds of committees should be acknowledged. Some should have greater funds to carry out their tasks: and elect someone to represent them at all levels with the weight which they should be accorded. This would correspond to basic principles, as clubs and committees are the driving forces of Rotary.

Third World Committees

Their task is long and based on mutual respect, so one needs to leave the team in place for more than three years. Perhaps 6 or even 9 years would be better, to bring a project – e.g. World Community Service – to a successful conclusion.

European Dimension

This should be taken into account. We must act on a European basis, not a National one. By doing this we might set an example for our politicians: we would show them that this is the correct strategy – a European outlook.

The coordination of Francophone Africa – ICC France, Belux, Germany – is being blocked at higher level. Yet, if we worked together at all levels for a target country we should achieve more and reduce the costs.

Large scale projects are sometimes not favoured if they are not to the new governor's liking, with large distances involved and the varied socio-economic and ethnic imponderables.

The Executive Council should aim at coordinating the activities of the ICCs: this should be done by the Chairmen of the ICCs and not by the National Coordinators.

It should update the website, establish a databank for material to be sent to the Third World and of all other activities (WCS), guarantee a vertical and horizontal transparent communication (Executive Council – ICCs), organise sessions for work groups and exchanges of views (based upon ground work).

We would not have meetings and reports from NCs. We need new aims and a vital force to change this Council into a 'new model'.

Those are my basic reflections. Actions must follow.

Hartmut said that he spoke as Chairman of the ICC Germany-Francophone Africa and founder of the Cross border meetings of the Presidents of the Rotary Clubs on both sides of Rhin de Lorrach, Ensisheim, Ottmarsheim, 3 clubs of Mulhouse, Mullheim-Badenweiler, 3 clubs of Fribourg. This initiative has flourished for years without any interference of the Executive Council and the Governors.

He was thanked for this interesting proposal which would be examined by the Executive Council and the National Coordinators.

M. Yann de Buyer, a chief administrator at Brussels followed with a talk - 'The New European Structure'

He began by referring to the divided Europe (pre 1989) and the stages which led to a coordinated Europe.

In 1942 Winston Churchill said: 'I believe that the European family can act in a concerted way within a Council of Europe'

In 1948 the Congress of the Hague agreed that an economic and political union should be formed to ensure security and social progress: there should be a parliamentary assembly and a Charter of Human Rights produced, together with a Court of Justice.

In 1949 with the Treaty of London, the Council of Europe, united in cooperation, was formed and met at Strasbourg on August 10th 1949.

1951 saw the creation of the European Community of Coal & Steel (Schuman declaration) and in 1952 the European Community Defence. 1959 – EEC.

Paul Spaak was to examine the possibilities of extending the economic cooperation beyond coal and steel. 1979 saw the first elections to the European Parliament.

So began a period of cooperation and integration.

Europe was united after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989: the Maastricht Treaty appeared in 1992 and was designed to give a political vocation to the EEC.

Supranational functions were increased in the EU: European citizenship was a fact.

1997 – Treaty of Amsterdam – increased the co-decision of European laws.

2001 - Treaty of Nice – introduced institutional reform allowing the countries of East and South of Europe to join the Union. 2004: signing of the European Constitution

Then came the integration of *PECO to the Council of Europe.

*Parliaments of Central & Eastern Europe

These countries should be democratic, respect Human Rights, allow minorities their say, have a viable market economy and be able to subscribe to the political, economic and monetary union aims.

What is the future of Europe?

Control anti-europeanism. Europe is wrongfully accused of being too bureaucratic and too distant from the preoccupations of its peoples. The 'NO' to the Constitution is a set back. There must be a re-launch of enthusiasm: the Euro Parliamentarians must go amongst the citizens and explain the advantages of continuing to build Europe.

The European Flag, the European Anthem are symbols. Integration is still partial because countries are afraid of consequences. Countries with a strong economy and a stable currency, like UK and Denmark will reflect the national feeling of 'wait and see'. However the Council of Ministers is not elected: each government decides issues through the national parliament.

Rotacip and modern communications

Canal Baser (Turkey) gave the example of 3 ICCs in different countries which can interact and coordinate with National Coordinator by means of his company which can organise a website. Please remember that Rotaractors may be more expert and can transfer information more easily. It was demonstrated at a Paris conference how different people can use their own language. The system can be viable, money is needed: funded by a travel company, insurance which runs a Raffle/Draw: sponsorship via a credit card. Jon Eiche said that this does happen in the USA but they are against it – ‘cultural insurance’.

Website can encompass all Europe: Canal gave the example of the ICC Turkey/Moldova and Romania – this is the ‘first layer’ which gives you experience. You need a basic knowledge before you can start. Clubs initiates activities and ICCs become links. Projects are publicised – and you have to know how to transfer the information to this ‘first layer’.

This menu of possible projects displayed gives a resume, similar to the World Community Service exemplar. The message board is based on requests.

He cited an example of the forthcoming RYLA in Turkey in June

How many knew of this? Click on RYLA and all the information is immediately available. We can save forests by using the web.

We then broke into three Workshops. We did not pursue the three suggested, as there was an urgent need to respond to a document detailing certain changes to a draft text on ICCs in the RI Code of Policies.

Sharon Cyr, a Division Manager of RI Programmes, has to present this to the June Board meeting.

After the workshops and report back, it was agreed that Serge and Arthur should finalise all suggestions and changes. These would be communicated to Sharon and on his next visit to Evanston, Serge would discuss further and personally give further explanations to the Board, if necessary.

Gian Paolo Marelo, as a new National Coordinator for Russia, then gave a presentation about the new Russian District 2220, which includes western Russia and the Ural Mountains. DG Andrey Danilenko now ran the district which had previously been directed by three districts in Finland and Sweden. There are 48 clubs.

The clubs to the east of the Urals join D5010, with clubs from Alaska and Canada.

He stressed the work done with the ‘Friends of Russia’ in the USA and repeated that the Charter presentation of the ICC Russia/USA would be made on June 8th 2007, at Evanston.

Elections

There was a need to rectify the date of the President’s election. Normally, the President was elected for a three year term but because of the death of 1st VP Virgilio Marzot, PP Onder Bilginer had officiated for a 4th year. In order to regularise the election for three years, and to have both Jose and Serge serving two and a half years, it was decided that President Jose Carlos continue until December 2007 and that SVP Serge should become President in January 2008 when 2nd VP Antonio de Majo would become 1st VP and Toni Polsterer become 2nd VP.

Antonio could then become President in 2010 at Strasbourg, or wherever the Plenary Meeting is held.

General Secretary Arthur and Treasurer Herve were re-elected.

People were reminded that there would be an RI Presidential Conference with the participation of the Inter Country Committees, in the presence of RI President 2007-2008 Wilf Wilkinson, in Cannes beginning at 2pm on Friday March 28th - the theme - 'Peace is Possible'.

Thanks were expressed to President Jose Carlos for his leadership and to SVP Serge for masterminding this Plenary meeting and for his untiring work at Evanston and elsewhere to further general understanding of ICCs.

That evening there was a Reception and Gala Dinner in the hotel. This was a fitting end to a day of Rotary endeavour and friendship.