

## **Comparison ICCs versus other types of international Rotarian relations**

Dear Rotary International Directors,  
Dear Fellow Governors ,  
Dear Rotarian friends and spouses.

It is for me a **great pleasure**

-to share with you my enthusiasm as regards the concept of the inter-country committee, or ICC ,

-and to explain to you why I am here today to propose to you a strong and durable development of ICCs between Europe and North America.

My first presentation is dedicated to the topic of "the comparison between ICCs and other types of international Rotarian relations ".

And, first of all, **Why** indeed **make this comparison?**

There are 2 reasons:

- on the one hand this concept is not sufficiently well known by many Rotarians, whether French or American,

- on the other hand, after conversations with club presidents or district governors, I have felt that they have 2 concerns:

\* the first is that there may be some sort of duplication with other types of international Rotarian relations, which resulted in questions like:

\*shall I have to give up my relations with my twin-club?

\*why not start with a Rotary friendship exchange? Or,

\*does the establishment of an ICC require carrying out new WCS projects?

\* the second relates to the risk of a substantial cost for establishing and supporting an ICC.

This is why I am going to present and explain to you a short comparison between the inter-country committee and three other kinds <sup>(1)</sup> of international Rotarian relationships which are:

-the Rotary fellowship,

-the Rotary friendly exchange, and

-the twin club (or sister club) , often called "contact club" in France.

The comparison between these four institutions will be made according to **four criteria**, which are:

- their mission,

- the formalities necessary to their creation and their organization,

- their activities,

- and the costs involved as well as their financing.

**Right off, I can tell you** that the ICC is the most developed form of Rotarian international relations, and that it entails neither duplication with the three other forms previously mentioned nor substantial costs for establishing and supporting either its creation or operation.

However, an important similarity should be underlined amongst these 4 types of relations: It concerns their common objective, which is “To support mutual comprehension between peoples, as well as Peace, by reinforcing friendly relations between Rotarians around the world”. Peace and understanding are the ultimate objectives of the ICC.

Now, let me make a short analysis of each of these concepts that I mentioned previously.

**Firstly, the Rotary fellowship** (formerly known as recreational and vocational fellowship), has a **role** "of encouraging Rotarians who have a common interest in recreational, professional or vocational activities, , to associate themselves into groups".

It is **regulated** by the Rotary manual of procedures since it has to be structured as a legal entity, with a President elected for 2 to 3 years (and 2 other managers) and it requires the support from the governors of at least 3 districts of 3 different countries.

Its principal **activities** are the circulation of a news bulletin and the organization of exhibitions in particular at the conventions of Rotary international.

Finally its **costs** are covered by contributions of the members of the fellowship, possibly supplemented by a contribution of one or more of the founding districts.

*The Rotary fellowship is therefore the sharing in common of a passion, which implies the necessity for a durable and regulated structure.*

**The Rotary friendly exchange** has a **role** "of making it possible to the Rotarians of 2 different countries to carry out reciprocal visits and home stays with their families".

It is **organized** spontaneously, without any particular formality. It is a simple initiative at the club level, or district level, with several foreign clubs, particularly in conjunction with the Rotary International Convention. It does not require any durable management structure.

Its **activities are** limited to the visits of foreign countries and to the reciprocal accommodation of the invited people, and costs are covered by the Rotarians who take part in it.

*The Rotary friendly exchange is thus a simple visit with reciprocity, but it is*

***non-durable, without any prospect for common projects and without costs for the clubs or the districts involved.***

**The twin-club** does not have a **mission** that is clearly defined in the manual of procedures. But the twin-club is in fact intended to encourage the Rotarians of 2 clubs of different countries to get to know each other better, to visit each other and thereby eventually to join their efforts in a common WCS project.

It is an ***initiative between 2 clubs*** that requires little **formalism** - only a declaration to their 2 governors and an insertion in the national directories of both countries.

There is no obligatory **activity** other than an annual contact in order to know each other better; but sometimes a WCS project may be implemented together by the 2 (or more) clubs .

It is important to mention that in the case of ***a relationship between Europe and North America***, the annual visit can be considered as a heavy constraint for a small club because of the **distance** (which is both a source of incurred costs and travel fatigue) as well as of language differences since comparatively few Europeans – aside from those who are native English-speaking – speak American-English fluently and vice-versa. We shall see that this problem is removed in the case of an ICC since it consists of several clubs of one or more districts.

The major **costs** of a twin-club are generated by travel expenses at the time of the visits and by the accommodation of foreign Rotarians in return visits. Their financing is shared between the club and its members who personally handle all or part of their own travel expenses and lodging in return.

***The twin club is thus a durable relation of one club with another club, aiming if possible at a common project, and whose costs incurred by the visits abroad are often shared among the club and the participants in these visits.***

**And now, I wish to explain the functioning of the inter-country committee (ICC)?**

The **mission** of any ICC is relatively broad. It is clearly defined in the manual of procedures and in the brochure published by Serge GOUTEYRON (which you will find in the documentation that we are leaving with you).

It consists of " encouraging Rotarians of different countries to visit each other and motivate the districts to join with their counterparts of foreign countries in order to undertake WCS actions" ..

It also consists in the following:

- \* Supporting friendly exchanges, whether individual or in groups,
- \* Promoting the twinning and sponsoring of sister clubs, and
- \* Bringing information or training to Rotarians in newly created

Rotarian areas, if necessary.

*The ICC has therefore a durable mission of ambassador and coordinator, with promotion of common projects amongst clubs and participating districts (but not of direct projects by the ICC alone).*

*This mission is thus clearly distinct from those of the three other types of international relationship: it is at the same time much broader and less directly operational.*

What can we say now about the **activities** that an ICC undertakes?

- First of all, it organizes, every other year, a visit to the foreign country for the common general assembly meeting.
- Secondly, it draws up a summary of the member clubs projects ,and promotes projects considered as necessary actions and helps particularly the *younger generations* by supporting cultural meetings, both for leisure and professional reasons.
- Thirdly, it contributes to the creation of twin-clubs.

Thanks to its encompassing perspective of Rotarian relations between 2 countries, an ICC guides the principle developments in the relations between twin clubs towards either humanitarian projects, or education, or more recently Rotary initiation and training.

It is precisely at the level of the ICCs that one perceives an important difference in the projects of twin-clubs according to the respective level of development of their two countries. As examples, I would offer the following:

- If the two countries are at the same level of economic development the richer country contributes strongly to the financing of projects for the benefit of the other,

- if they are both at a comparable and/or advanced level of development, their common concerns will be much more:

\*to facilitate exchanges of young people not dealt with by Rotary international programs - for example by arranging for training periods in business firms for foreign students,

\*and to better understand the perception by foreign Rotarian friends of the key evolutions of the world community and of its economic environment.

*An ICC is thus a district-to-district type of Rotarian relationship that at the same time:*

- *prolongs in a structured and durable way the existence and the relations of several twin clubs of two different countries*
- *and can be a pilot for them in their future projects.*

But is an ICC **costly** to establish and to run ?

The answer is an unequivocal NO.

In fact :

\*the local section of an ICC can have modest administrative costs,

\*and all individual costs (such as travelling expenses) are borne by the participating members.

*The administrative costs are limited to:*

- \* establishment of the national section,*
- \* plus some correspondence expenses (limited by the use of e-mail),*
- \* plus the rental of a room for the periodic meetings of coordination and the annual assembly.*

This limitation of costs is possible if it is agreed:

- that the meals taken at the time of the meetings, as well as the travelling expenses are borne by the members (including those for the general assembly meeting abroad)
- and that an eventual news bulletin can be implemented by a member and distributed by e-mail.

**Our experience in France shows that an ICC can operate with modest annual payments of:**

- 15 to 30 U S. dollars per Rotarian member, or
- 30 to 60 U S. dollars per member club, or
- 200 to 250 U S. dollars per district member,
- and possibly an annual financing of (300 to 500 U S. dollars) by the founding district.

**Let me point out the fact that:**

**\*a club member may be member of an ICC even if his or her club is not itself a member,**

**\*a club may be a member whereas its Rotarians do not decide to be themselves members individually.**

***So, the cost of establishing and running an ICC is not prohibitive for members whether they are individual Rotarians, or clubs, or districts.***

**In conclusion, I wish to leave you with this clear message:**

- **1. The ICC is a well-proven means of fostering international Rotarian relations that deserves to have world-wide a place comparable with the success it has had in Europe(France is involved in 35 ICCs),**

**And therefore,**

- **2. One of the most important areas for future development should be the use of ICCs as a vehicle for building genuine relations between European and North American Districts.**

**I hope you share with me that hopeful vision and I thank you for your attention.**

**Robert HELINE**

***(1) The other types of international relations within Rotary are obviously not ignored, such as youth exchanges, scholarships, RYLA, Rotary volunteers, etc... But I chose the 3 types that have some features close to those of an ICC, and for this reason must be clearly distinguished from it.***