



Chapter 30

District 14 – Europe (1994-2019) ¹

Since 1920, Zonta International has grouped clubs by district. The following is information on the formation of District 14 from 1994 to 2019. As of August 2018, District 14 has 46 clubs in Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Lebanon.

District 14 was newly formed in 1994 together with Districts 27, 28, 29 and 30 after the division of the former District XIV. The short narrative is basically built on digitized minutes of the inter-district conferences of 1995 in San Remo (Italy), 1997 in Vienna (Austria) and 1999 in Montpellier (France) and particularly the district conferences from Chania in Greece in 2001 to Bad Gleichenberg in Austria in 2013. This is because district conferences are perfect places for Zonta International authorities to meet members from local clubs and to learn about the problems and progress with implementing Zonta International's global goals at a local level. District Conference records tell us the unique story of the commitment to and promotion of Zonta International goals in this region of the world.

From former District XIV to the new District 14

The district conference in Lausanne in 1993 was the last of the former District XIV conferences. During this conference, Zonta International President, Sonja Renfer, disbanded District XIV with the following words:

District XIV has always been something very special in the Zonta world. It is the largest and the most international district in the world and, at times, it has been the most outspoken district...Some of my illustrious predecessors found that District XIV was rather too outspoken on matters of Zonta international finances, organizational structure and administration...But they all highly respected your district for its great accomplishments in service projects, the high standard of membership and the high quality of club programs. Effective in July 1994, you will be splitting into five districts. I feel confident that the high standards of current District XIV will automatically become the standards of the five new districts.

¹ Research and text by Franziska Wein, Zonta Club of Erfurt, with editing and additional research compiled by Eva Nielsen.

District XIV Governor, Cornelia Klauser, continued to encourage the newly elected boards of the future new Districts 14, 27, 28, 29 and 30 to promote Zonta International in post-Cold War Europe and to connect with Zontians in Central and Eastern Europe: "La bonne terre de ce vieux District XIV a été bien préparée et bêchée: avec les nouveaux districts chaque cultivateur (gouverneur) aura plus de temps et d'énergie à vouer à sa parcelle"².

While the split into five new districts seemed to be the most appropriate approach to deal with new diversity and complexity in Post-Cold War Europe, the audience at the Lausanne Conference decided upon the proposal of the District XIV Board to have joint district conferences instead of separate district conferences and to work together on specified topics during special seminars. Two new activity formats were born: The inter-district conference open to the audiences of the five new districts and the inter-district seminar open to individuals of the European Zonta community.

During the 1993 Lausanne conference, the newly elected boards of the future Districts 14, 27, 28, 29 and 30 were asked to discuss and decide upon the allocation of areas in consideration of the best connections to new Zonta clubs in Central and Eastern Europe within their districts. The new District 14 board discussed the issue but, at the time, were unable to agree on the allocation of the Austrian Areas. The allocation of Areas was only one of the major concerns of the so-called Eastern clubs. Sonja Renfer shared the following personal reflections during her address to the Lausanne conference:

When talking to our new Zontians in the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, I have come to realize what an impact these new Zontians are beginning to have upon our organization. Their priorities are somewhat different from ours, because they are looking upon Zonta as a means to help them to build up trust amongst themselves and to gradually learn to trust us: Zontians from the Western world. Trust to them is a totally new experience....Coupled with trust, there is friendship which we, in Western Zonta circles, keep telling everybody we truly have. Do we really have that true trust and friendship as well as the tolerance which is part of true trust and friendship?

Besides this comprehensive understanding of receiving new Zontians from Central and Eastern Europe, including rethinking basic virtues such as face-to-face friendship and trust, the new Eastern clubs were welcomed through generous financial support. Many of the Western SOM-Clubs of the Eastern clubs paid the annual renewal fees to Chicago for their Eastern protégés and/or sponsored their travel costs to Zonta International meetings and conferences. Until the early years of the new millennium, District 14 boards maintained the former District XIV policy of exempting Eastern clubs from district dues for a limited initial period and subsequently offering them reduced district fees. The new clubs in Central and Eastern Europe indeed appreciated the many kinds of financial support and relief they received.

² "The rich soil of the former District XIV has been well prepared and tilled: with the new districts, each farmer (governor) will have more time and energy to devote to her plot of land"

During the first inter-district conference of San Remo in 1995, the first governor of the new District 14, Gerda Senkyr, confessed to the audience of the District 14 section meeting that she had entered into the office with mixed feelings:

when the former rich and mighty District XIV was divided into five districts in Lausanne two years ago, our district kept the famous number 14 due to the fact that the oldest European club (Zonta Club of Vienna I) belongs to our district. But our district was generally regarded as the smallest one, as far as the number of members is concerned, and thus as the district with the least financial means among those five 'children'. Being their neighbors, we also have to take care of most of the clubs of former Eastern Europe. Our district comprises ten countries...and eight languages. It was very appealing for me starting from such a difficult situation of such a variety of cultures and languages to try to make these countries grow together to a community in the sense of Zonta by mutual understanding, friendship and tolerance.

In complaining about a disadvantaged starting position in terms of diversity, she was right, since the objective of splitting the former District XIV was to reduce complexity and diversity. When complaining about an inferior starting position in terms of members and economic potential, she might have felt some stress of competition created by the activity format of the Inter-district Conference where the members of five districts came together to report and meet each other. With a return to the traditional activity-based format for the District Conference in 2001, the feeling of being the deprived child with four privileged siblings had disappeared.

Philosophy and performance: District 14 on the move

President-Elect Margit Webjörn attended the District 14 District Conference at Chania in 2001. In her address to the audience, on "an occasion of the new millennium", she announced the slogan for her biennium: "Combine Service and Advocacy." Advocacy at that time was a new word in the vocabulary of Zonta International. Asking the Zonta community to intervene in favor of women's issues at local, national and international level in politics, legislation and administration was another challenge. This new task, added to the traditional focus on helping women in need through service projects and encouraging young women through Zonta awards, would greatly modify the self-concept of Zonta International. The philosophy slowly shifted from making the world a better place for women and girls globally through various services and activities in the spirit of friendship and trust, to a making a difference as the leading non-governmental women's rights organization worldwide.

The new emerging ambition emphasized the necessity to strengthen the organization and potential of Zonta International. Collaboration with Care and the United Nations in international service projects already had to be underpinned by sufficient members and funds. Thus, membership growth has always been a basic concern of Zonta International, and membership development was a major topic of each Inter-district and District Conference from San Remo in 1995 to Bad Gleichenberg in 2013. Area Directors and OMC-Chairmen reported in-depth, Governors and Zonta International Foundation Ambassadors encouraged the clubs to expand or at least to retain their members and stop shrinkage, and to donate to the international projects via the Zonta International Foundation.

Since 2008, there have been two ZIF Ambassadors in District 14, one of them in charge of Area 03 and the other in charge of the remaining Areas 01, 02, 04 and 05. The ambassadors

motivate the clubs to think and act globally when working on advancing the status of women. Another lesson to be learned by many clubs in District 14, was to focus activities and services on women's issues.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the governors and area directors of District 14 have implemented various policies and actions to recruit new and younger members. There have been many seminars, workshops and lectures concerning issues such as trafficking in persons, violence against women, female circumcision or female health risks. Some Zontians became member of women's committees or deputies at the European Council or the United Nations in order to advocate for women's interests and augment the audibility of Zonta International. Professionalized communication of Zonta awards and service projects at various levels contributed to increased visibility of the organization. The focus on women's needs and issues, advocacy activities and enhanced communication did reach younger professional women in Areas 01, 02 and 03 and helped to increase membership and the number of clubs, whereas in the Areas 04 and 05 the overwhelming economic problems brought a decrease in membership and the number of clubs.

Club activities at the local level were also affected by the new approaches of Zonta International to reshaping the service organization into a respected non-governmental organization with a strong focus on its mission and clever combination of service and advocacy. More and more clubs in District 14 donated to the Zonta International Foundation and invested in local and international awards, initially the Young Women in Public Affairs Award in order to encourage and empower young women. They also collaborated in campaigns such as the Zonta Says NO to Violence Against Women campaign and created inventive women's projects, tilling the fields of education, health scouting, prevention and cure. There were still donations for reasons not related to women's issues, for example natural disasters, but when area directors reported on such donations during District Conferences, they did so almost as a confession!

Summary

The history of District 14 is a one of change and transformation of Zonta International in terms of philosophy and performance. Early in the history of District 14, Zonta leaders often talked about friendship and trust. Compare this with the keywords of Governor Gertraud Ribitsch in her address to the audience of the 2013 District Conference in Bad Gleichenberg: visibility and credibility, underpinned by networking, membership, motivation, and communication. These few words perfectly describe the development of Zonta International from a traditional service organization to an ambitious and professionalized non-governmental organization down to the present day.

Zonta International Directors

1996–1998: Gerda Senkyr, Zonta Club of Wien-Parkring, Austria

2000–2002: Barbara Tramosch, Zonta Club of Innsbruck Tyrol, Austria

2006–2008: Kika Ziti, Zonta Club of Athens, Greece

2008–2010: Ingeborg Geyer, Zonta Club of Wien I, Austria

2012–2014: Gabriella Samara Paphitis, Zonta Club of Nicosia, Cyprus

2014–2016: Gertraud Ribitsch, Zonta Club of Graz, Austria

2016–2018: Ursula Werner, Zonta Club of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

Zonta International Foundation President

2003–2005: Gerda Senkyr, Zonta Club of Vienna-Parkring, Austria

District Conferences

- 1995: San Remo, Italy
- 1997: Vienna, Austria
- 1999: Montpellier, France
- 2001: Chania, Greece
- 2003: Zagreb, Croatia
- 2005: Murnau, Germany
- 2007: Veszprem, Hungary
- 2009: Linz, Austria
- 2011: Nicosia, Cyprus
- 2013: Bad Gleichenberg, Austria
- 2015: Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany
- 2017: Brixen-Bressanone, Italy

Below is a timeline of district history highlights.

1994: The new District 14 had five areas.

- Area 01: clubs located in Austria, Croatia and Slovakia.
- Area 02: clubs located in Austria, Czech Republic and Italy.
- Area 03: clubs located in Germany.
- Area 04: clubs located in Greece, Cyprus and Israel.
- Area 05: clubs located in Hungary.

1998: 43 clubs in five areas.

2002: 46 clubs in five areas:

- Area 01: nine clubs in Austria, Croatia and Slovakia.
- Area 02: 10 clubs in Austria, Italy and the Czech Republic.
- Area 03: 14 clubs in Germany.
- Area 04: nine clubs in Greece, Israel and Cyprus.
- Area 05: four clubs in Hungary.

2008: 47 clubs in five Areas:

- Area 01 had nine clubs.
- Area 02 had nine clubs.
- Area 03 had 18 clubs.
- Area 04 had seven clubs.
- Area 05 had four clubs.

2016: The district had four areas:

- Area 01: Austria, Hungary and Croatia.
- Area 02: Austria and Italy.
- Area 03: Germany.

- Area 04: Greece, Cyprus and Lebanon.
Israel was lost in 2005 and Slovakia in 2008.
Lebanon joined in 2013 and was added to Area 04.

2018: 1,250 members.³

2019: 1,231 at 31 May 2019

History of formation of District 14 clubs

Austria

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1930/ 1956	0107	Zonta Club of Vienna*	01	
1970	0641	Zonta Club of Innsbruck I	02	
1971	0672	Zonta Club of Linz	02	
1972	0697	Zonta Club Salzburg	02	
1980	0923	Zonta Club of Vienna City	01	
1980	0950	Zonta Club of Vienna-Parkring	01	
1982	1020	Zonta Club of Vocklabruck-Attersee	02	
1983	1039	Zonta Club of Klagenfurt	02	
1984	1092	Zonta Club of Graz	01	
1986	1147	Zonta Club of Innsbruck Tyrol	02	
1987	1190	Zonta Club of Burgenland	01	
1990	1249	Zonta Club of Baden Area		2012
1994	1461	Zonta Club of Sankt Poelten	01	
1998	1611	Zonta Club of Woerthersee	02	
2006	1820	Zonta Club of Feldbach	01	

* See District XIV.

Croatia

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1994	1460	Zonta Club of Zagreb	01	

Cyprus

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1995	1497	Zonta Club of Nicosia Region	04	

Czech Republic

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1991	1341	Zonta Club of Ceske-Budejovice		2006
1993	1413	Prague City		2001
1993	1441	Nachod		2001

³ Zonta International Directory online

Germany

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1952	0287	Zonta Club of Munich I	03	
1958	0416	Zonta Club of Bad Kissingen-Schweinfurt	03	
1961	0491	Zonta Club of Garmisch-Partenkirchen E.V.	03	
1967	0579	Zonta Club of Munich II	03	
1978	0833	Zonta Club of Aschaffenburg Area	03	
1984	1100	Zonta Club of Wuerzburg Area	03	
1992	1379	Zonta Club of Nuernberg Area	03	
1992	1386	Zonta Club of Weimar Area		2017
1993	1414	Zonta Club of Suhl Area		2012
1994	1457	Zonta Club of Alzenau	03	
1996	1547	Zonta Club of Erlangen Area	03	
1998	1618	Zonta Club of Funf-Seen-Land	03	
1999	1630	Zonta Club of Ingolstadt	03	
2001	1688	Zonta Club of Murnau-Staffelsee	03	
2003	1755	Zonta Club of Munchen Friedensengel	03	
2004	1777	Zonta Club of Muenchen City	03	
2004	1779	Zonta Club of Wuerzburg Electra	03	
2005	1786	Zonta Club of Herzogenaurach	03	
2011	1888	Zonta Club of Erfurt	03	
2012	1906	Zonta Club of Fraenkisches Seenland	03	
2015	1933	Zonta Club of Landshut	03	
2017	1966	Zonta e-Club of Bavaria	03	

Greece

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1966	0558	Zonta Club of Athens	04	
1973	0725	Zonta Club of Larissa		2014
1973	0741	Zonta Club of Volos		2017
1983	1044	Zonta Club of Piraeus	04	
1992	1363	Zonta Club of Chania		2014
1995	1510	Zonta Club of Nea Smyrni	04	
1997	1579	Zonta Club of South East Attica		2004

Hungary*

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1991	1310	Zonta Club of Szombathely	01	
1992	1382	Zonta Club of Budapest City	01	
1994	1456	Zonta Club of Veszprem Area	01	
1996	1532	Zonta Club of Szeged		2009
2011	1878	Zonta Club of Heviz-Region	01	

* From 1994–2015 Area 05.

Israel

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1990	1307	Zonta Club of Tel Aviv		2004
1991	1316	Zonta Club of Haifa		1995

Italy

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1989	1234	Zonta Club of Brixen-Bressanone	02	
1990	1272	Zonta Club of Bozen-Bolzano	02	

Lebanon

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
2013	1917	Zonta Club of Beirut	04	

Slovakia

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2018	Closed
1992	1373	Zonta Club of Bratislava		2008