



Chapter 33

District 29 – Europe (1994–2019)¹

Since 1920, Zonta International has grouped clubs by district. The following is information on the formation of District 29.

The district was established in 1994 by the division of the large District XIV into five new districts², and as of 2019 had 73 clubs encompassing eight countries or parts of countries: England, northern France, Guadeloupe (a French Department in the Caribbean), the Netherlands, North Rhine-Westphalia /Germany, Russia and Spain. Six languages are spoken in District 29 and only one country has Zonta's language (English) as its official language.

When District 29 was established, intense relationships and friendships developed between the 240 clubs of the former District XIV. There was an especially strong feeling of solidarity with the newly founded clubs and clubs-in-organization in former Eastern countries such as Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Croatia. The relationships continued through personal contacts as well as support through the district's Solidarity Fund for all official Zonta meetings such as district and Area meetings or Conventions.

Each of the newly organized districts incorporated at least one club in an Eastern country. This increased the district's commitment to integrating the Zontians from the Middle East (Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Iran) into the Zonta life of Western Europe. Personal friendships survived the division and enriched not only the European Zonta family, but worldwide face-to-face encounters, although language and distance barriers needed dedication and respect on both sides.

One result of the division into five new districts was that contacts between clubs and the different organizational levels were easier to establish and continue. There were also more opportunities to serve in higher district or international positions. While the number of

¹ Research and text by District Historian Irene Wiese-von Ofen with editing and additional research by Eva Nielsen.

candidates varied from year to year, there were generally more European candidates ready to serve and assume greater responsibility.

In the formation of District 29, some 80 clubs were united to make a difference in the lives of women.

The first years

Because of the existing pool of experienced Zontians, the first elected officers were well trained in Zonta administration and service, so that there were no difficulties in building up the new district and its Areas in the UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands. While new clubs were generated, some clubs were lost, especially in the UK, Scotland, Ireland and France, and language problems and different approaches and attitudes often led to a decrease in membership. The same was seen in Russia due to the large distances in addition to language and cultural differences. Economic aspects were also highly relevant in the district and remain so today. Overall, District 29 was, and still is, growing and developing a feeling for common responsibility and partnership as well as engagement in local and international service. The enthusiasm in the first years of being member of a group of women with the chance for international friendship became a more rational expectation of a network of international professionals with benefits for themselves and others.

District life

The European clubs are still learning to live with differences in an organization that asks the members to pledge themselves to democratic principles, human rights, honesty, trustworthiness, transparency and mutual respect of diversity.

This high standard continues and remains important in attracting new members to new or existing clubs. However, it is becoming more difficult to find younger members who are able to dedicate time and money to Zonta within their increasingly difficult work-life balance.

The enrichment members receive is highly valued, not only in Zonta, but in integrating the Zonta experience into their professional and personal lives. Even if time and money is needed for participation in Zonta events, members benefit from new opportunities and awareness. The main motivation remains feeling responsible for sharing privileges.

Consequentially, district conferences have become a platform for an exchange of ideas, with workshops reflecting on the future of Zonta and what the role of the individual may be. Conferences allow members to share their different experiences of "best practice", and offer a variety of examples of world views and global perspectives.

Many European participants in conventions have learned about involvement in Anglo-Saxon civil society and have shared information about social and participatory models in Europe and the rich diversity of cultures.

Step-by-step, the original charitable orientation in the district's Zonta projects turned to service, international support and advocacy. Members learned to work with the diversity and differences in cultural attitudes towards sponsorship. In recent years, advocacy has played a larger role. As a result, more process orientation and legal awareness took place. More input in changing

women's concrete living situations, especially in countries at war or with poor health situations, determined the discussions as well as the concrete service programs on the local and international level.

Zonta International began to intensify cooperation with the UN and encouraged clubs to support national legal initiatives for achieving better living conditions for women. District 29 encouraged initiatives in the various countries of the district to work together with national women's organizations and implement direct cooperation between clubs and national activities. This included cooperation with the European Union as well. Although the different countries within the district are unequal in their number of clubs (Russia has two clubs, Spain and the UK three each, France 12, the Netherlands 21, and Germany 32) and economic power differences exist, there is balanced behavior in electing officers and when deciding on locations for conferences or workshops.

Countries with a small number of clubs, such as the UK, Russia and Spain, as well as those with many clubs, such as the Netherlands and Germany, all nominate candidates for governor or propose conference venues. There is also a rotation in leadership positions following unwritten rules. This is important so that no Area feels dominated, and the District Board continues working with an international spirit in mind.

Club activities

In recent years, clubs in District 29 have developed special programs and service projects.

German clubs began with programs focused on mentoring and encouraging young female migrants to work with them for better educational opportunities. The program "Great Girls meet Great Women" was initiated to bring girls together in the time between the end of secondary school and the beginning of university or other vocational training programs. Experienced Zontians served as mentors. Many clubs secured financial support for a women's shelter and worked together with the relevant governmental institutions. Supporting these shelters has a long tradition among German clubs. The international Zonta Says NO to Violence Against Women campaign was supported unanimously and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention was assisted by a very successful signature promotion.

As one of their important initiatives, clubs in France supported programs to prevent violence in families and campaigns against female genital mutilation. Another project was to cooperate in programs for active aging. The French clubs took part in a campaign against forced marriage (Mariages forcés dans L'Europe multiculturelle) and advocated against biotechnical research using human embryos.

In an example of cross-border engagement, the Zonta club of Kaliningrad, Russia, secured a special medical program for children through the medical and financial assistance and friendship of the Zonta Club of Essen I. Another important activity was the support of a home for women who had experienced violence. Because of the difficult economic situation in Russia, these projects in Kaliningrad have earned admiration for Zontians in Kaliningrad.

One example of the various activities in the Netherlands is their project to raise a large amount of money for the "STOP TB" campaign, a global movement to boost social and political action to

stop the unnecessary spread of tuberculosis around the world. Another activity clubs in the Netherlands has been very active in is to invite women who are no longer active in their profession to become members. These well-educated women with extensive business and professional experience have the time and can provide a special pool of knowledge. Advocacy for inclusion of such women led to a change in other parts of the Zonta world and to updated membership bylaws.

Another field of lively club activity emerged in connection with the Zonta International awards. Club members work continuously with the awardees of the Young Women in Public Affairs Award and keep up with contacts at universities through the Jane M. Klausman Women in Business Scholarship and the Amelia Earhart Fellowship.

In the UK, members work with and assist YWPA awardees, and foster relationships with AE Fellows through a yearly dinner. Because many non-UK women are studying aerospace and aerospace-related sciences and engineering at UK institutions, it is otherwise challenging for club members to maintain contact with this group of young women.

Other district Areas are using the Zonta awards for successful public relations activities, raising awareness of Zonta as an organization and helping to increase participation in service projects.

The above examples are just some of the characteristic activities and the huge variety of imaginative projects involving the large number of clubs and members in District 29.

Besides the aforementioned projects, all clubs have yearly programs with lectures and speeches, regular meetings, workshops, benefit events or exhibition visits. They also keep in touch with other Zonta clubs. There are several cross-border friendships in Europe that take shape via visits, shared service activities, or an exchange program where a child from one Zonta family stays for a week or longer with another Zonta family. This reinforces not only personal friendships, but Zonta's objective of fellowship and mutual trust.

Some projects support exceptionally talented young women in music and art, recognizing that even elitist youngsters sometimes need support. In France, for instance, Past International President France de la Chaise-Mutin implemented a course for young musicians. In Germany, a National Music Prize was awarded to young women for more than twenty years with the awardees sometimes invited to play in benefit concerts for the clubs. As a result, the initial support was, in a way, returned to the donors.

In addition to the projects of the Zonta club of Kaliningrad mentioned earlier, another Russian club, the Zonta Club of St. Petersburg, has organized exhibitions of women painters. As it encourages young artists, this is an important project to empower independence. Fostering independence is also a topic in Spanish clubs. This is in contrast to the situation 30 years ago when attempts were first made to organize Zonta clubs in Spain and Portugal. At that time, women's independence was still weak.

Because of the various cultural and political situations in the different Areas of District 29, projects related to governmental initiatives differ. Nevertheless, international projects are supported unanimously. The Zonta International awards are of great importance to cooperation

with schools and universities and clubs have learned to use them as a public relations tool to promote local awareness and as a source of potential future members.

Inter-district activities³

After the division of District XIV in 1994, seminars in Burg Ludwigstein, Germany, brought Zontians from clubs in the various new districts. Roundtable discussions were focused on the integration of the Eastern countries, the history of the European countries and their conflicts and how to overcome them, and the philosophy and plans for a sustainable future. Those weekend seminars with mixed Zonta themes and participants from clubs of different European Districts were the forerunners of the European Seminars which began in 1994 and have since been held in Lübeck, Bonn, Stuttgart, Brügge, Wien, Tampere and Tartu.

All in all, District 29 is a lively, active, alert community of different countries, cultures and generations.

District 29 Conferences⁴

- **1995:** San Remo, Italy – Inter-district Conference, Governor Simon Mirabel, France. International Representative: 'Folake Solanke, ZI President. Eight workshops focused on women at work, women in public life, birth control, public relations, the environment, health, Organization Membership and Classification (OMC), education and literacy.
- **1997:** Tours, France – Governor Beryl Miller, UK. International Representative: Josephine Cooke, ZI President. Three workshops focused on the eradication of violence against women and children, conducted in French, English and German.
- **1999:** Maastricht, the Netherlands – Governor Ursula Birker-Eckert, Germany. International Representative: Margit Webjörn, ZI Vice President. Workshop focused on women's health conditions and consequences for research.
- **2001:** Wuppertal, Germany – Governor Lesje Vermeulen, the Netherlands. International Representative: Mary Ellen Bittner, ZI Vice-President. Three workshops focused on domestic violence, improving women's life quality, and health.
- **2003:** Oxford, England – Governor Gabriele Springer, Germany. International Representative: B. J. Bourdon (unable to attend). Three workshops in three languages focused on Zonta's European Identity as an NGO. Zonta in the 21st century, how Zonta makes a difference, challenges and opportunities.
- **2005:** Meaux, France – Governor Regina Smit, the Netherlands. International Representative: Olivia Ferry, ZI President-Elect. Two workshops focused on women and science and Zonta in the 21st century.
- **2007:** Münster, Germany – Governor Nicole Herb, France.

³ The Inter-district weekend seminars and the European seminars

⁴ Research by District Historian Irene Wiese-von Ofen

International Representative: Olivia Ferry, ZI President.
Workshop focused on improving and reinforcing service actions, including LAA.

- **2009:** Tours, France – Governor Brigitte Siller, Germany.
International Representative: Ragna Karlsdottir, International Director.
Workshop focused on obstetric fistula as international service project. Discussion took place in three languages on Zonta’s organizational structure and finances.
- **2011:** Madrid, Spain – Governor Lydia Chailloux, France.
International Representative: Kikuko Hara, International Director.
Workshop focused on women and violence against women on a national scale.
- **2013:** London, England – Governor Catherine McEwan, UK.
International Representative: Lynn McKenzie, ZI President.
Workshops focused on advocacy and “Zonta’s tomorrow.”
- **2015:** Groningen, the Netherlands – Governor Marijke Jongbloed, the Netherlands.
International Representative: Sharon Langenbeck, international director.
Theme: Empowerment through Capability.
Workshops focused on the Zonta Awards, Bylaws, recruiting members, and “change without fear”.
The first meeting of the alumnae network of Zonta awardees took place, organized by committee chairman Irene Wiese-von Ofen and Susanne Wedever-Pampus and highly supported by Governor Marijke Jongbloed.
- **2017:** Dortmund, Germany – Governor Gabriele Brübach
International representative: Judy Kautz, USA.
Conference Theme: “Empowering Women through Service and Advocacy”.
Workshops focused on the international service projects and educational programs. This was in accordance with the third alumnae meeting “Zonta Awardees Connected” that took place in Dortmund as well. (The second meeting was in 2016 at the International Convention in Nice. The fourth meeting was a joint meeting at the European Inter-district Seminar in Tartu, Estonia in 2019. This was organized by Irene Wiese-von Ofen, Susanne Wedever-Pampus and Gabriele Brübach in cooperation and with the support of the seminar organizers in Tartu.)
- **2019:** Eindhoven, the Netherlands – Governor Brigitte Leferink, the Netherlands.
The fifth alumnae meeting took place.

International Officers from District 29

- Susanne von Bassewitz, Zonta Club of Dusseldorf in Germany
 - 2018–2020 International President
 - 2016–2018 International President-Elect
 - 2014–2016 International Vice President
 - 2012–2014 International Director

International Directors and International Committee Chairmen from District 29

- Irene Wiese-von Ofen, Zonta Club of Essen I in Germany
 - 2003–2005 International Foundation Director

- 2005–2007 International Foundation Vice President
- Zonta Club of Paris in France
 - 1996–1998 International Director
- Lydia Chaillou, Zonta Club of Meaux et Région in France
 - 2018–2020 International Director
- Ursula Birker-Eckert, Zonta Club of Krefeld in Germany
 - 2000–2004 / 2002–2004 Chairman of the Young Women in Public Affairs Award Committee
- Iesje Vermeule–Haanappel from the Netherlands and Gabriele Springer from Germany
 - 2004–2006 Co-chairmen of the International Service Committee

Timeline of district history highlights

1994: Five areas:

- Area 01: France and Russia
- Area 02: Germany
- Area 03: Ireland
- Area 04: The Netherlands
- Area 06: The United Kingdom.

2002: Four areas:

- Area 01: France and Russia
- Area 02: Germany
- Area 03: The United Kingdom and Ireland
- Area 04: The Netherlands.

2004: Guadeloupe (French Department in the Caribbean) joined the district.

2005: Spain joined the district.

2008: 71 clubs in four areas.

2012: Ireland was lost.

2016: Scotland was lost.

71 clubs organized in the following four areas:

- France in Area 01
- Germany in Area 02
- Guadeloupe in Area 01
- Russia in Area 01 (St. Petersburg) and Area 02 (Kaliningrad)
- Spain in Area 01
- UK in Area 03
- The Netherlands in Area 04.

2018: 1,747 members⁵

2019: 73 clubs in 5 areas

- Area 01 – 16 clubs in north-west France, Spain, Guadeloupe, Russia (St. Petersburg)
- Area 02 – 16 clubs in Germany
- Area 03 – three clubs in England
- Area 04 – 21 clubs in the Netherlands
- Area 05 – 17 clubs in Germany and Russia (Kaliningrad).

History of formation of District 29 clubs

England*

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2019	Closed
1949	0229	Zonta Club of London		2014
1968	0604	Zonta Club of Oxford		2003
1979	0874	Zonta Club of London II	03	
1981	1253	Zonta Club of Brighton Area		1997
2010	1870	Zonta Club of Guilford	03	
2012	1898	Zonta Club of London City	03	

* In 2016 there were three clubs in District 29, Area 03.

France

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2019	Closed
1968	0610	Zonta Club of Bourges Area	01	
1971	0678	Zonta Club of Tours	01	
1972	0706	Zonta Club of Sables D'Olonne	01	
1980	0946	Zonta Club of Paris Port Royale		2013
1982	1001	Zonta Club of Paris III	01	
1983	1066	Zonta Club of Rouen Reine Mathilde		2019
1986	1144	Zonta Club of Le Havre Cap De La Heve	01	
1987	1165	Zonta Club of Rouen Galaor		2003
1987	1169	Zonta Club of D'Orleans Et Region	01	
1988	1218	Zonta Club of Ouest de Paris		1998
1988	1224	Zonta Club of Dieppe Et Sa Region	01	
1989	1245	Zonta Club of Paris-Etoile	01	
1996	1549	Zonta Club of Meaux Et Region	01	
1997	1567	Zonta Club of Chinon Et Region	01	
1997	1592	Zonta Club of Paris Port Royal-Concorde*	01	
2003	1743	Zonta Club of Paris Alliance		2010
2004	1764	Zonta club of Lille-Lambersart		2008
2004	1768	Zonta Club of Baie-Mahault 'Fleur de Canne', Guadeloupe **	01	

⁵ ZI Directory online

* See District XIV

** Guadeloupe is a French Department in the Caribbean

Germany

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2019	Closed
1958	0408	Zonta Club of Bonn	02	
1963	0503	Zonta Club of Essen I	05	
1966	0552	Zonta Club of Bochum	05	
1966	0575	Zonta Club of Wuppertal	02	
1973	0743	Zonta Club of Dusseldorf I	02	
1975	0777	Zonta Club of Moenchengladbach Area	02	
1978	0865	Zonta Club of Viersen Area	02	
1979	0888	Zonta Club of Leverkusen	02	
1980	0918	Zonta Club of Cologne	02	
1982	0999	Zonta Club of Krefeld	02	
1982	1019	Zonta Club of Iserlohn Area	05	
1987	1187	Zonta Club of Hagen Area	05	
1988	1212	Zonta Club of Monchengladbach II Area	02	
1992	1357	Zonta Club of Niederrhein Area	02	
1993	1426	Zonta Club of Essen II	05	
1994	1459	Zonta Club of Lippstadt Area	05	
1994	1471	Zonta Club of Dusseldorf II	02	
1997	1564	Zonta Club of Aachen	02	
1998	1623	Zonta Club of Paderborn	05	
2000	1655	Zonta Club of Bielefeld	02	
2001	1683	Zonta Club of Muenster	05	
2002	1723	Zonta Club of Dortmund	05	
2002	1733	Zonta Club of Siegen Area	05	
2004	1781	Zonta Club of Bonn-Rheinaue	02	
2005	1784	Zonta Club of Arnsberg	05	
2005	1787	Zonta Club of Oberhausen Rheinland	05	
2005	1795	Zonta Club of Hoexter	05	
2008	1852	Zonta Club of Koln 2008	02	
2010	1862	Zonta Club of Hamm/Unna	05	
2010	1871	Zonta Club of Niers-Schwalm-Nette	02	
2014	1928	Zonta Club of Dortmund-Phoenix	05	
2016	1949	Zonta Club of Rheine	05	

Ireland

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2019	Closed
1970	0677	Zonta Club of Limerick District 29		2000
1981	0975	Zonta Club of Dublin District 29		1995
1983	1045	Zonta Club of Adare Area District 29		2012
2000	1653	Zonta Club of Dublin District 29		2010

The Netherlands

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2019	Closed
1964	0524	Zonta Club of The Hague I	04	
1966	0565	Zonta Club of Rotterdam	04	
1968	0603	Zonta Club of Amsterdam *		2000
1969	0628	Zonta Club of Groningen		2008
1970	0640	Zonta Club of Zuid-Limburg Area		2016
1980	0915	Zonta Club of T'Gooi Area	04	
1980	0956	Zonta Club of Utrecht	04	
1981	0995	Zonta Club of Mergelland	04	
1983	1049	Zonta Club of Friesland Area	04	
1983	1067	Zonta Club of Zwolle	04	
1985	1109	Zonta Club of The Hague II	04	
1985	1130	Zonta Club of Kennemerland-Zuid Area	04	
1987	1174	Zonta Club of Deventer	04	
1989	1240	Zonta Club of Noord Brabant	04	
1990	1280	Zonta Club of De Baronie Breda	04	
1991	1321	Zonta Club of Arnhem Area	04	
1991	1322	Zonta Club of Eindhoven	04	
1991	1335	Zonta Club of Groningen-1991	04	
1995	1508	Zonta Club of Enschede District 29		2000
1996	1527	Zonta Club of Drenthe	04	
2000	1671	Zonta Club of Gouda	04	
2003	1746	Zonta Club of Aan De Leede	04	
2004	1776	Zonta Club of Rond De Reest	04	
2005	1798	Zonta Club of Rotterdam Aan De Maas	04	
2007	1827	Zonta Club of Amsterdam*		2010
2007	1836	Zonta Club of Ruremonde	04	

* There have been two Zonta Clubs of Amsterdam – the first (no. 0603) operated from 1968 to 2000; the second (no. 1827) from 2007 to 2010.

Russia

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2019	Closed
1991	1344	Zonta Club of Moscow I		2004
1992	1400	Zonta Club of St Petersburg		1997
1993	1406	Zonta Club of St Petersburg Neva	01	
1994	1458	Zonta Club of Moscow II		2010
1994	1465	Zonta Club of Borovishi		1997
1999	1641	Zonta Club of St Petersburg Center		2004
2004	1783	Zonta Club of Kaliningrad	05	

Scotland

Year	Club	Club Name	Area as	Closed
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Chartered	Number		of 2019	
1967	0587	Zonta Club of Aberdeen		2016

Spain

Year Chartered	Club Number	Club Name	Area as of 2019	Closed
2005	1791	Zonta Club of Madrid KM 0	01	
2010	1873	Zonta Club of Andalucia Malaga	01	
2011	1876	Zonta Club of Andalucia Granada	01	