

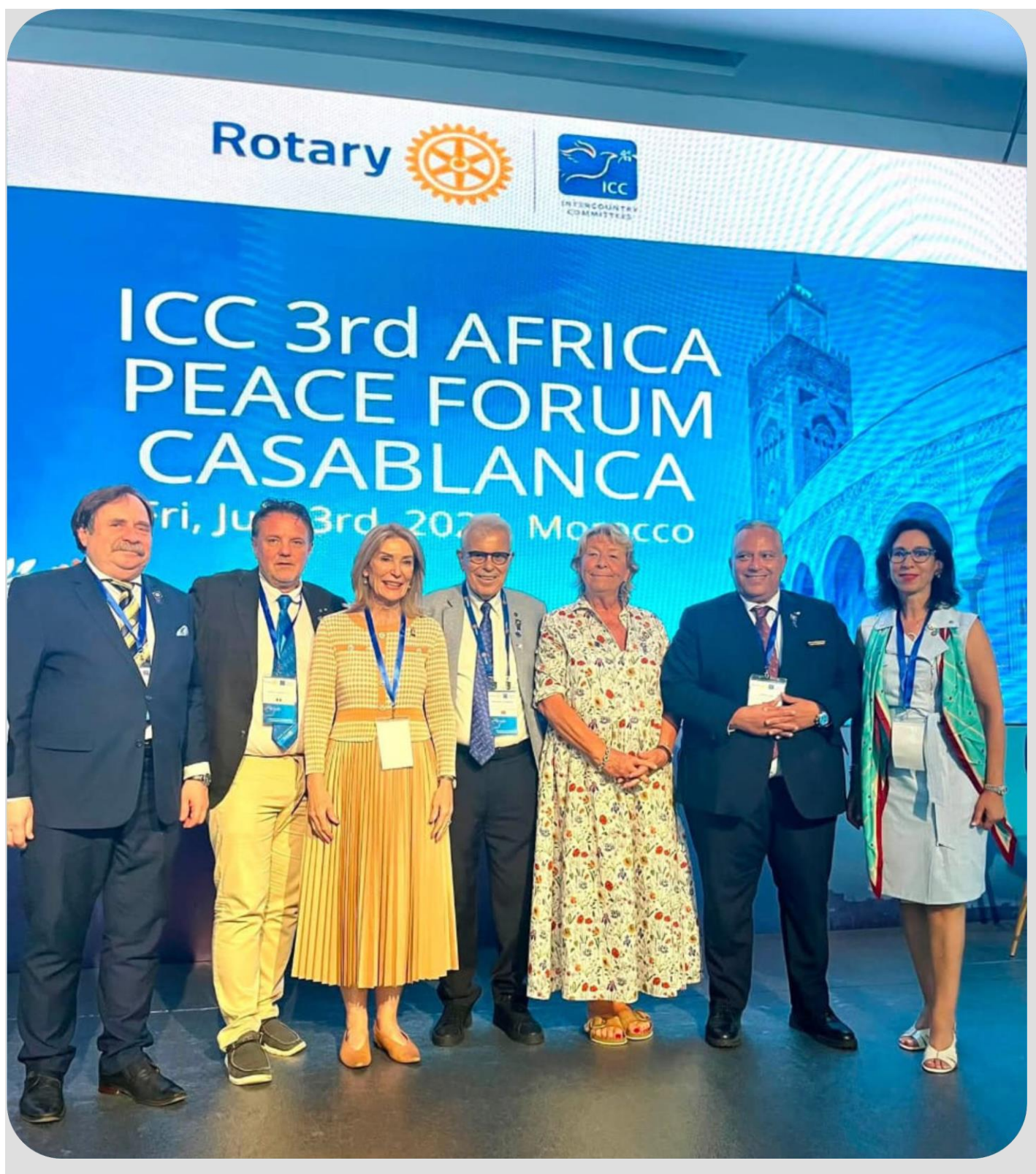
Uniting Rotarians
Across Borders



The BRIDGE

ICC UPDATE

2nd Edition - August 2026



ROTARY EUROPEAN ACTION SUMMIT

The ICC Breakout Session

12th September 2026

World Trade Center, **Rotterdam**

Tokio Room - 12 to 2 PM

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REGISTRATION CLOSING ON 1ST SEPTEMBER

[HTTPS://ROTARY-ICC.ORG/EVENT/ROTTERDAM-SUMMIT-2026-ICC-BREAKOUT-SESSION/](https://rotary-icc.org/event/rotterdam-summit-2026-icc-breakout-session/)



Uniting Rotarians
Across Borders



The Rotary International Code of Policies (RI Code of Policies) is the official governance document that provides detailed guidance for implementing the Constitution and Bylaws of Rotary International.

Adopted and updated by the Rotary International Board of Directors, it establishes policies governing the administration of Rotary clubs, districts, zones, membership, programs, public image, finances, and international service activities.

The Code serves as a practical reference for Rotary leaders at every level, ensuring that decisions and operations are consistent, transparent, and aligned with Rotary's

mission and strategic priorities.

While the Constitution and Bylaws define the organization's fundamental framework, the Code of Policies translates those principles into operational policies that support effective and consistent governance throughout the global Rotary network.

[Click here to access the latest June 2026 Code of Policies](#)

ICC Section is under Code 21.020, Page 126.

Intercountry Committees: From Friendship to Global Impact

By Pierangelo Panozzo in conversation with Annemarie Mostert

The recent ICC Forum, held online with the participation of Rotary leaders and Intercountry Committee representatives from around the world, reaffirmed a fundamental truth: in an increasingly fragmented world, personal relationships remain the strongest foundation for international cooperation.

Among Rotary's many programs, the Intercountry Committees (ICCs) have become one of the organization's most effective instruments for strengthening dialogue, creating trust between nations, and transforming friendship into meaningful service. Their purpose extends well beyond fostering contacts between clubs; they create long-term partnerships capable of generating sustainable humanitarian initiatives and promoting mutual understanding across cultures.

This is not merely an aspiration. Around the world, ICCs have facilitated joint projects in healthcare, education, youth exchanges, environmental protection, and community development. Partnerships between Rotary clubs in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas have demonstrated that lasting cooperation begins when Rotarians choose to work together beyond national boundaries, combining expertise, resources and local knowledge to achieve a common goal.

The Rotary Action Plan challenges every member to increase our impact, expand our reach, enhance participant engagement, and strengthen our ability to adapt. Intercountry Committees embody these priorities by creating durable international relationships that enable clubs and districts to develop

projects with greater scale, continuity and effectiveness.

Having the privilege of serving within the ICC Executive Council Working Group on Programs, Institutional & Diplomatic Relations for 2026–2028 has further reinforced my conviction that the future of Rotary will increasingly depend on its ability to connect people before connecting projects. Institutions may open doors, but it is trust between individuals that creates lasting partnerships.

In a period when traditional diplomacy often struggles to overcome political divisions, Rotary continues to demonstrate the value of what might be called citizen diplomacy: a form of international engagement based on mutual respect, shared values and voluntary service. The Intercountry Committees represent one of the clearest expressions of this Rotary philosophy.

The challenge before us is therefore not simply to maintain the ICC network, but to strengthen it, broaden its reach and encourage greater participation from clubs and districts worldwide. Every new partnership between two countries has the potential to become a bridge for peace, understanding and sustainable development.

The future of the Intercountry Committees is not only about expanding Rotary's international presence. It is about reaffirming one of Rotary's founding principles: that friendship, when translated into service, remains one of humanity's most powerful forces for building a more peaceful world.



Courage in Our Hands: Mandela Day and the Unfinished Work of Justice

By Pierangelo Panozzo

Winston Churchill once observed that courage is the virtue which makes all other virtues possible. It takes courage to attempt what no one has attempted before, to lose with grace, to absorb a setback without being broken by it. It takes courage to take on a task even when others appear better equipped or more experienced. It takes courage to help others recover a dream they had long stopped believing in. And it takes courage, above all, to nail one's colours to the mast and set a target that is clear, public and unequivocal.

No life illustrates that definition of courage more completely than that of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, a man who converted twenty-seven years of imprisonment into the moral foundation of a nation's reconciliation —and whose legacy today anchors a single day each year in which the world is invited to prove that the same courage still lives among us.

A day built to be acted upon, not merely observed. On 18 July, the world marks the birth of Nelson Mandela, born in 1918 in the Transkei and long since transformed into a universal symbol of the struggle against apartheid, of reconciliation between former enemies, and of human dignity under the most extreme pressure. Yet Nelson Mandela International Day, established by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2009 and observed for the first time in 2010, was never conceived as a simple commemoration.

It is, by design, a call to action —one measured, symbolically, in sixty-seven minutes of community service, a single minute for each of the sixty-seven years Mandela devoted to the cause of social justice. It's Still in Our Hands. The theme chosen for 2026 by the UN General Assembly and the Nelson Mandela Foundation —"It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity" —deliberately echoes Mandela's

own denunciations of destitution and marginalisation.

The South African government, in presenting this year's edition, situated the message at the centre of a wider effort: to confront poverty, resist inequality, and build a society grounded in justice, precisely at a moment when social exclusion and widening economic divides are once again testing the cohesion of democracies far beyond South Africa's borders.

The timing is not incidental. The Nelson Mandela Foundation itself acknowledges that we are living through an increasingly polarised era, in which inequity continues to deepen and new forms of populism, dispossession and division are compounded by climate change, war and forced displacement —forces that are impoverishing entire communities in real time.

This appeal carries particular weight inside South Africa, where more than three decades after the fall of apartheid, some of the highest levels of social disparity anywhere in the world persist, and where large segments of the population still face profoundly unequal access to education, employment and essential services. What sixty-seven minutes actually mean.

The symbolic core of the day remains unchanged: sixty-seven minutes dedicated to an act of service, one minute for every year of Mandela's own struggle. But the gesture has never been purely symbolic. Since 2015, the General Assembly has broadened the day's scope to promote humane conditions of imprisonment and to recognise the work of prison staff as a form of social service-ashift that gave rise to what are now known internationally as the "Nelson Mandela Rules" on the treatment of prisoners.

New this year

Among the notable developments of the 2026 edition is the launch, in New York, of the first Nelson Mandela Global Leadership Forum, convened by the Nelson Mandela Foundation to examine the kind of leadership the present moment demands —a gathering that included the Mayor of New York among its speakers. In South Africa itself, as every year, schools, businesses, government bodies and civil society organisations mobilised volunteers for large-scale projects, from the refurbishment of schools in disadvantaged areas to food drives for communities in need.

A legacy that continues to test the present

Beyond the annual ritual, Mandela Day functions as a genuine test: how far do the values invoked in the 2009 UN resolution —conflict resolution, race relations, the promotion and protection of human rights, reconciliation, gender equality, the rights of vulnerable groups, the fight against poverty, the pursuit of social justice —still occupy real space on the international agenda, rather than merely ceremonial space on the calendar?

More than three decades after the end of apartheid, Mandela Day continues to remind us that social justice is not measured in celebration but in the capacity to turn principle into concrete action. That is precisely the meaning carried by this year's message: the responsibility of building a fairer society remains, still today, in our hands.

A Rotarian postscript

It is worth adding, from where I write, that Intercountry Committees have themselves demonstrated no small measure of that same courage over the past seventy-six years — sustaining friendship and cultural exchange, a passion for service, and a quiet, persistent investment in peacebuilding across borders that ideology alone has rarely managed to bridge. Mandela's insistence that courage is proven in service rather than declared in speeches is, in that sense, a principle the ICC network has tried, in its own modest way, to live by.

Intercountry Committees have demonstrated great COURAGE over the past 76 years. May we continue to invest in our friendship and cultural exchanges, passion for service and peacebuilding.



Exarro Resources and the Rotary District 9400 in November 2018 unveiled a 1 meter tall replica of the famous Nelson Mandela Statue, located in Nelson Mandela Square, in Sandton, in Johannesburg, to allow the visually impaired to touch and “see” the statue in their own way. The 1 meter statute was defined and modelled by artist and sculptor Kobus Hattingh, who was also responsible for the original 6 meter statue. The idea for the replica statue came about after Rotary Club of Kyalami project leader the late PDG David Grant travelled to Lisbon, Portugal, in June 2013, and saw a replica statue for the visually impaired next to an original. Speaking at the unveiling, PDG David indicated that the original statue, as one of the most photographed statues in the country, enabled Mandela's ethos of peace and reconciliation to be transmitted globally, which would be further enhanced by the replica.

“Africa Is Rising”: Rotary Director Emmanuel Katongole Sends Video Message to Third ICC Peace Forum in Casablanca

By Pierangelo Panozzo

A video message from Rotary International Director Emmanuel Katongole has opened the Third ICC Peace Forum in Casablanca, Morocco, with the Ugandan industrialist and philanthropist framing the gathering as further proof of what he called “Africa rising.”

Speaking directly to camera, Katongole — who represents Zones 21 and 22 of Rotary International, covering Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, for the 2026–2028 term — opened with a warm address to the “family of Rotary” before turning to the significance of the forum’s host city.

“I am extremely thrilled that the third ICC Peace Forum is taking place in the beautiful city of Casablanca, in Morocco,” Katongole said. “I’ve been in Casablanca, I love Casablanca, and I love the work that you do at the ICC.”

The message singled out two figures central to the forum. The first was Annemarie Mostert, Executive President of the Rotary Intercountry Committees for the 2026–2028 term, whom Katongole congratulated on assuming the ICC presidency. “This is Africa rising, this is what Africa is known for,” he said. “Africa should take its rightful place in the world.”

The second was Younes Saih, the newly installed District Governor of Rotary District 9010 — which spans Morocco and Tunisia — whom Katongole addressed as “my friend, my brother.” “I know what you’re going to do, I know the beauty that you’re going to put to Rotary,” he told Saih. “We are going to grow together, we are going to cause a lasting impact

together.” Katongole closed by describing the Casablanca gathering as a foundation for the year ahead rather than an isolated event. “Let this third ICC Peace Forum be a beginning, be the foundation of what a great year you’re going to have,” he said, urging delegates to “let ICC be the premier organization that campaigns and stands for peace in the world.”

The Third ICC Peace Forum continues Rotary’s rotating series of continental peace gatherings under the Intercountry Committees, following previous editions in Cairo and Cape Town. The Casablanca forum marks the first time the event has been hosted in a French-speaking African country, consistent with plans outlined by Rotary leadership at the 2025 Calgary Convention.



3rd Africa ICC Peace Forum Report

Introduction

The 3rd Africa ICC Peace Forum held in Casablanca, Morocco on 3rd July 2026 explored one central question:

How can Rotary's international friendships become practical instruments for building peace?

Hosted by DG Younes, Dr Dina Saih and Rotary District 9010 in partnership with the ICC Executive Council, the Forum marked the first major international event of the new 2026–2028 ICC leadership. It therefore served not only as a conference on peacebuilding, but also as the launch of a renewed vision for the International ICC movement. Throughout the day, participants returned repeatedly to a common message: peace is not created by declarations alone. It is built through relationships that produce tangible improvements in people's lives. Every successful partnership between clubs, districts, countries and organisations strengthens understanding, creates opportunity and reduces the conditions that lead to conflict. The Forum demonstrated that Rotary's greatest contribution to peace is not traditional diplomacy, but citizen diplomacy —people from different cultures working together to solve common problems.

Forum Leadership

Host: Rotary District 9010, Kingdom of Morocco

Convenor: ICC Executive Council

Chair: PDG Annemarie Mostert, President, ICC Executive Council 2026–2028

Host Governor: DG Younes Saih, District 9010

Organising Committee Chair: Dr Dina Saih

Forum at a Glance

Date: 3 July 2026

Venue: Hyatt Regency Casablanca, Morocco

Theme: Building Positive Peace Through Partnership

Programme

Opening and Flag Ceremony

Four Plenary Sessions

Strategic Partnership Signings

Panel Discussions

Question and Answer Sessions

Networking, Tour

135 Attendees, ICC Chairs, Section chairs or participations from 19 Nations, representing 41 countries

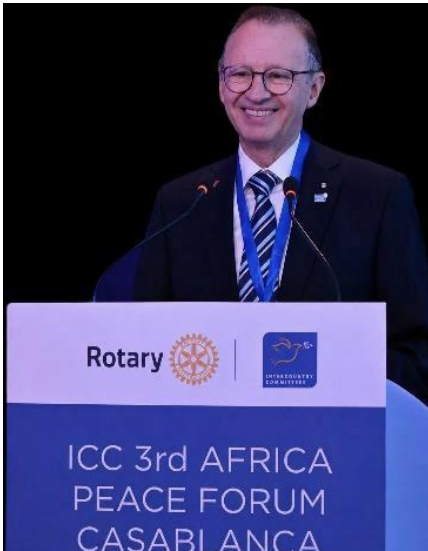
Participants

The office of His Majesty, King Mohammed VI, Government representatives, DGs, DGEs, PDGs, members of the ICC Executive Council and ICC Chairs and ICC Section Chairs Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, NGOs, educational institutions, Professional organisations, international development partners

Opening Session

The Forum opened against a backdrop of significant change. Both District 9010 and the ICC Executive Council had on the 1 July entered with new leadership, creating an atmosphere of optimism and renewal.

After a very special flag ceremony, messages from Rotary International Director Emmanuel Katongole, RI Director for Programmes and Services, Ellina Kushnir, as well as ICC President Elect Alessandro Pastorini congratulated DG Younes as well as President Annemarie Mostert with their new term and stressed the importance of the work done through the ICC. Africa is rising and increasingly becoming a source of innovation, leadership and partnership rather than simply a recipient of international assistance.



The opening speakers challenged participants to judge ICC success not by the number of relationships that exist but by the quality of these relationships they create and the impact they deliver.

Casablanca, long recognised as a meeting point between Africa, Europe and the wider world, provided an appropriate setting for a conference centred on international friendship

Plenary Session 1

Actionable Peace, Strategic Partnerships and Crisis Resilience

The first plenary explored how peace is strengthened through practical cooperation. Presentations demonstrated how sustainable development, humanitarian action and strategic partnerships all contribute to positive peace by reducing inequality, increasing opportunity and strengthening resilient communities.

The Moroccan National Initiative for Human Development illustrated how long-term investment in education, health, employment and local development creates conditions that discourage instability.

The response to the Al Haouz earthquake provided an equally powerful example of Rotary's ability to mobilise international friendship networks rapidly into humanitarian action.

Rather than acting as implementing organisations themselves, ICCs were shown to provide an essential connecting role—bringing together districts, clubs, international partners and local communities able to deliver assistance effectively.

3rd Africa ICC Peace Forum Report

Plenary Session 2

Youth at the Helm

One of the strongest themes throughout the Forum was intergenerational leadership.

Rather than presenting young people as "future Rotarians", the Forum demonstrated that Rotaractors and Interactors are already making substantial contributions to Rotary's humanitarian work.

Projects presented included:

- rural school development
- medical caravans
- mental health initiatives
- educational support
- orphan assistance
- community health programmes

Speakers emphasised that successful leadership combines youthful innovation with experienced Rotarian mentorship.

The relationship is complementary rather than competitive. This approach reflects the ICC commitment to integrating Rotaract into every aspect of its future work.





Plenary Session 3 Breaking Barriers –Digital Innovation and Universal Access

Digital inclusion should be recognised as a peace rather than simply a technology issue. Communities excluded from trusted digital services risk increasing inequality, misinformation and social instability. Conversely, safe access to digital education, healthcare, communications and economic opportunity strengthens resilience and reduces conflict.

There are three essential conditions:

- meaningful digital access
- trust and cyber resilience
- locally delivered solutions.

Subsequent presentations explored artificial intelligence, smart villages and digital inclusion across Africa.

The discussion concluded that Rotary's trusted local networks position it uniquely to help communities benefit from digital innovation while avoiding new forms of exclusion.

Plenary Session 4

The Power of Two

The final plenary demonstrated how successful ICC partnerships move beyond friendship into measurable humanitarian impact.

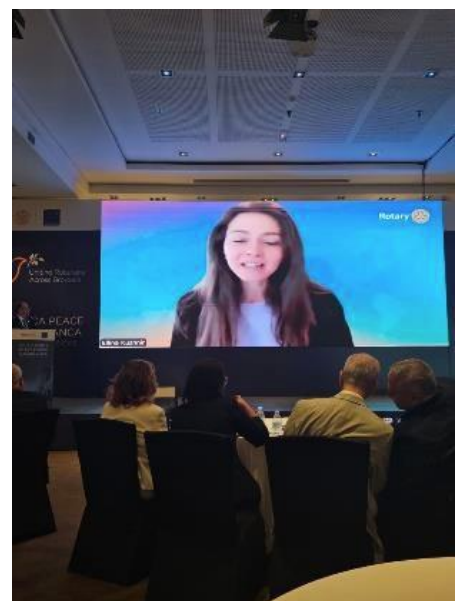
The Rise Up Girls initiative illustrated how long-standing ICC relationships can be revitalised through projects addressing education, leadership, health and empowerment for girls.

Additional presentations highlighted emergency medical preparedness, community health initiatives and previous international medical partnerships involving Moroccan Rotary clubs.

Throughout the discussion one important principle emerged repeatedly:

ICCs do not replace clubs.

Instead, they act as facilitators, connectors and trusted international partners that enable clubs to undertake larger and more effective projects together.





Key Strategic Messages

Several themes consistently emerged across every session.

-Peace is built through relationships

Peace is not merely the absence of conflict. It grows through trust, cooperation, education, opportunity and shared humanitarian service.

-Africa is leading innovation

Africa was presented not simply as a beneficiary of international cooperation but increasingly as a source of innovative solutions and leadership.

-Youth must lead alongside experience

Rotaract is no longer viewed as a future resource but as an essential partner in designing and delivering Rotary service.

-Digital inclusion is peacebuilding

Technology should be viewed as infrastructure for peace when delivered safely, ethically and inclusively.

-ICC must become more operational

The Forum reinforced the new ICC vision of becoming:

- more accountable

- more transparent
- more measurable
- more responsive to District Governors and clubs.

Practical Lessons for ICCs

The discussions produced several practical conclusions applicable throughout the ICC network.

- Build relationships before projects.
- Support clubs rather than duplicate their work.
- Integrate Rotaractors into leadership teams.
- Develop partnerships across sectors, including NGOs, universities and public authorities.
- Treat digital inclusion as an emerging Area of Focus for peacebuilding.
- Measure success by outcomes rather than activities.
- Convert friendship into sustainable humanitarian action.

Strategic Partnerships

The Forum concluded with the signing of several partnership agreements involving organisations working in humanitarian assistance, health, agriculture, tourism, women's empowerment and environmental sustainability. These agreements demonstrated the ICC strategy of expanding collaboration beyond Rotary while maintaining Rotary's role as a trusted international convenor.





The ICC Executive Council now has formal agreements with:

-Gift of Life Adventure Foundation (GOLA), which accelerates awareness, advocacy and philanthropy for organ donation in India and globally deeply engage Rotary International to unite for Organ Donation

-ASF Aviation sans Frontières, Avion-Hôpital –“Access to healthcare by air transport”

-Agronomeset Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (AVSF), a professional and advocacy-based international solidarity association with 48 years of experience.

-The Rotary Action Group for Girls' Empowerment (RAG4GE), which is committed to fostering international leadership, friendship, and service. It is action-oriented where its membership is composed of any community member who has expertise and/or a passion for being active in designing solutions, creating awareness, and executing local and international programs and projects focused on Girls' Empowerment.

-ZEBUNET, an association that helps development in poor countries through Microcredit, A Small Loan for a Great leap Forward

-End Plastic Soup (agreement signed in London in 2023 with renewed actions at the ICC Peace Forum in Bergamo in June 2026)

-The African Tourism Board (ATB), which is dedicated to promoting Africa as One Destination through tourism development, destination marketing, strategic partnerships, investment promotion, sustainability, cultural exchange, and economic growth.

Previously signed MOUs

-Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP)

-My Body Is My Body (MBIMB), a free child safety programme using music and songs

-Institute For Economics and Peace (IEP)
New ICC relationships were also formalised, further extending opportunities for future international cooperation.

The Casablanca Declaration of Intent

The Forum published a Declaration of Intent to establish joint Peace-building, cultural exchange and humanitarian service across countries.

Additional activities showcasing included, a taste of traditional music, food, tourist activities, various fellowship and home hosting dinners, together with a Gala event hosted by the district for the hand over the Governors' Chain.



Key Outcomes

- Confirmation of the ICC Executive Council's renewed strategic vision for 2026–2028.
- Strong integration of Rotaract into ICC leadership and programmedelivery.
- Recognition of digital inclusion as a significant contributor to peacebuilding.
- Expansion of strategic partnerships with humanitarian and development organisations.
- Reinforcement of citizen diplomacy as Rotary's distinctive contribution to international peace.
- Greater emphasis on measurable outcomes, accountability and practical collaboration.

Next Steps

Participants committed themselves to translating the Forum's discussions into practical action.

Priority actions include:

- strengthening ICC activity within districts;
- developing new international club partnerships;
- encouraging youth co-leadership;
- expanding collaboration with external partners;
- supporting practical peacebuilding initiatives; promoting measurable impact across all ICC activities.

Closing

The 3rd Africa ICC Peace Forum demonstrated that peace is built not only through

international institutions but also through ordinary people choosing to work together across cultures, languages and borders. Throughout the Forum, Rotary's InterCountry Committees were consistently presented not as administrative structures but as networks of trust capable of transforming friendship into humanitarian action. Whether responding to natural disasters, supporting education, promoting women's empowerment, improving digital inclusion or strengthening community resilience, the common thread was collaboration.

The Casablanca Forum therefore represented more than a successful peace forum. It marked an important step in the continuing evolution of the ICC movement towards a model that is more practical, more inclusive, more accountable and more focused on delivering measurable benefits for communities around the world.

FINAL COMMENT

An important element of the Peace Forum was the hosts' emphasis on the social and fellowship part of the gathering, together with the opportunities they organised for participants to get to know Morocco outside of Casablanca. All of these are key ingredients in the InterCountry Committees contribution to the Rotary experience and service.

This event was world class. New and existing friendships were celebrated and best practises shared. The third ICC African Peace Forum in Casablanca was peacebuilding in action.

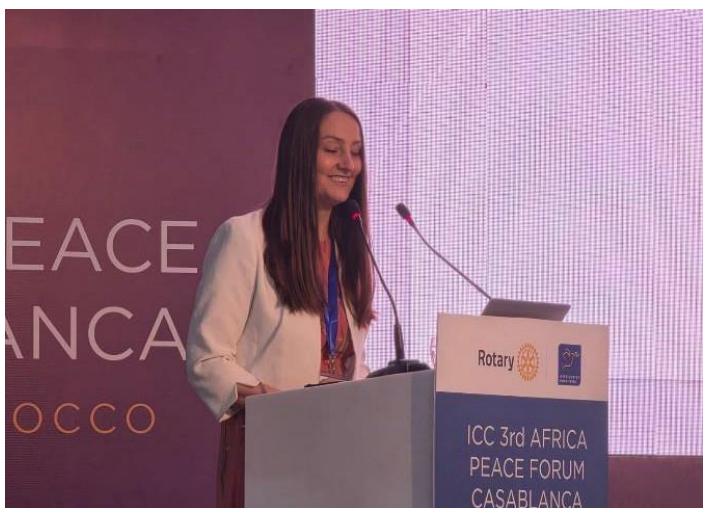


MOUs with

1. Portugal and South Africa.
2. Switzerland/ Lichtenstein and D9400 (Northern South Africa, Eswatini, Botswana and Southern Mozambique).

We were honoured as DG Grace van Zyl, D9400 participated on-line.





CREATION OF PORTUGAL - SOUTH AFRICA ICC

-  **Casablanca**
-  **3 July 2026**
-  **Constituional Charter signed**
-  **Portugal & South Africa**

This moment counted with the presence of the President of the Executive Council of the ICCs, Anne Marie Mostert, of the President of the Portuguese - South Africa ICC, Alberto Guerra, the Vice-President, Paula Messias and with the online participation of the South African CIP President, Tony Gouveia, and the District 9400 Governor, Grace Van Zyl, showing the big effort put into this international cooperation project.

Why does it matter?

The establishment of this ICC marks a significant milestone in strengthening the bonds of friendship, cooperation, and mutual understanding between Portugal and South Africa. This new platform aims to foster dialogue, promote the exchange of experiences, encourage the development of joint projects, and strengthen the connections between individuals, institutions, and communities in both countries.



HOW?

IT RESULTS OF THE ONGOING EFFORTS TO BRING PORTUGAL AND SOUTH AFRICA CLOSER TOGETHER, THROUGH A RANGE OF COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE INITIATIVES:

- TWINNING BETWEEN THE ROTARY CLUB OF COIMBRA SAÚDE AND THE ROTARY E-CLUB D9400 PORTUGUESE INTERNATIONAL,
- TWINNING BETWEEN THE ROTARY CLUB OF OEIRAS AND THE ROTARY E-CLUB D9400 PORTUGUESE INTERNATIONAL.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PORTUGAL-SOUTH AFRICA ICC REPRESENTS A SHARED VISION OF COOPERATION, FRIENDSHIP, AND PEACEBUILDING.

THE SIGNING OF THIS CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER DURING A CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO PEACE IN AFRICA REINFORCES THE BELIEF THAT DIALOGUE, AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ARE ESSENTIAL FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING AMONG PEOPLES AND FOR BUILDING A MORE SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE.

**THE PORTUGUESE - SOUTH AFRICA ICC IS CREATED TO
BUILD LASTING BRIDGES BETWEEN PEOPLE, CLUBS AND
COMMUNITIES.**

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An Unforgettable Journey with ICC

by **ARPIC Habiba Bennani-ICC Member-Tunisia**

What a fantastic experience this 3rd Peace Forum was, a worthy successor to the Cairo and South Africa editions!

I'm hitting the road again with a grateful heart, a wealth of inspiring projects in mind, and wonderful friendships and new contacts. The adventure continued through northern Morocco.

An unforgettable journey to Tangier with the wonderful Intercountry Committees team, discovering local wonders.

Tangier, the gateway to Africa

From views of Spain from Cape Spartel to the lively alleyways of the Kasbah, Tangier captivates with its cosmopolitan energy.

Tetouan, Arab-Andalusian elegance

An authentic immersion in one of Morocco's most beautiful medinas, amidst traditional crafts and whitewashed facades.

Chefchaouen, the blue pearl.

Walking through Chefchaouen with fellow Rotarians from Rotary's Intercountry Committees is to experience a shared serenity. Every azure alleyway becomes the setting for a confidence shared, a burst of laughter, or an idea for a future humanitarian project.

The city's blue resonates curiously with the color of our organization, like a symbol of peace and clarity.

Let us remember that the Intercountry Committees are not just agreements signed on paper. They live through the steps we take together, the harira soup shared at dinner, and this common will to tear down walls and build bridges. This trip to Northern Morocco has come to an end, but the energy sparked by this encounter is only just beginning. The Intercountry Committees and Rotary still have many wonderful chapters to write together, across the seas.







CORE – Europe Begins with Encounter

A Rotarian contribution to European understanding through personal encounters, youth Programmes and cross-border cooperation.

By PDG Klaus Brodbeck, RC Ortenau-Liberty, Germany ICC National Chair Germany

For many of us, Europe has become something we take for granted. We travel across borders, study, work, trade and provide help beyond national boundaries. Precisely for that reason, we easily forget: Europe is not a natural phenomenon. Europe is a decision. And decisions must be brought to life again and again.

CORE – Cooperation of Rotarians for Europe – was born from exactly this conviction. Rotarians from France, Germany and Italy did not want to adopt yet another declaration about Europe. They wanted to make Europe tangible: concrete, personal and intergenerational. The participating districts from Auvergne - Rhône - Alpes, Baden-Württemberg and Lombardy are connected by more than geographical proximity: by economic strength, cultural diversity and shared responsibility.

The founding idea dates back to 2020. At that time, concern was growing that European unity, while politically organized, was no longer naturally supported by society. After the Second World War, the European peace project needed little explanation. The wounds were visible, the memory was alive. Today, national egoisms, indifference and destructive voices are becoming louder again. Anyone responding to this merely with ceremonial speeches will achieve little.

CORE therefore builds on what Rotary does particularly well: personal encounters, trust and joint projects. Declarations are to become experiences. Neighbourhood is to become friendship. Friendship is to become responsibility. Young people are at the heart of CORE. The Trination School Project brings together students from the three regions. They work jointly on European topics, improve their language and social skills, and experience that Europe does not begin abstractly in Brussels, but in conversation with peers from another country.

A second key project is Rotary European Stars, an international RYLA format for students, young professionals and emerging leaders. It focuses on values, responsibility and the

question of what role young people want to play in a strong and peaceful Europe. This is complemented by club partnerships, New Generations Service Exchange, joint Global Grants, Rotaract activities and alumni work. Today, several districts from France, Germany and Italy are working together within CORE. Together, they represent hundreds of Rotary clubs and many thousands of Rotarians. This shows the potential that arises when Rotary combines regional strength with international cooperation.

Once a year, CORE Rotarians meet for a European annual conference. The sixth CORE Conference will take place from 9 to 11 October 2026 in Kehl and Strasbourg – in a place where Europe does not need to be explained, because it is lived every day. CORE does not see itself as a political programme, nor as a competitor to existing structures. CORE is a Rotarian contribution to European understanding. Governments can sign treaties. Administrations can launch programmes. But Europe will only become permanently resilient if people know one another, trust one another and assume responsibility together.

This is precisely where Rotary's strength lies. We are locally rooted and globally connected. We bring professional experience, networks and a culture of service. If we place this strength at the service of Europe, we can achieve more than we sometimes dare to imagine.

CORE is therefore both an invitation and a mission: for clubs to build partnerships; for districts to support young people; for Rotaract to generate European momentum; and for all Rotarians to regard Europe not as an inherited possession, but as a task.

For Europe remains alive only if we live it. Rotary can make a special contribution to this. CORE shows how.

Two Drops of Life: A Morning in Bangalore That Changed How I See Service

By **Jenny Elisabeth Bohlin**
Section Chair ICC for Italy Malta San Marino - India

There are days that pass through you, and there are days that stay. National Polio Day (28/06/2026) in Bangalore was one that will stay with me forever.

I had the privilege of joining the polio vaccination campaign of covering in the city, administering Do Boond Zindagi Ki — “two drops of life” — to children whose smiles I will not forget. India’s fight against polio is nothing short of legendary: a country of more than a billion people, once home to a huge share of the world’s polio cases, declared free of the disease through one of the most extraordinary public health mobilisations in modern history. But legendary victories are not self-sustaining. Keeping the world polio - free demands the same discipline, the same organisation, and the same willingness to show up, year after year, drop after drop.

Standing in line with health workers and fellow Rotarians that morning, what struck me most was how something so simple, two drops, administered in seconds, carries the weight of an entire global promise. It is not just a service project. It is a covenant with the next generation: that no child, anywhere, should have to live with a disease we already know how to prevent.

A sign of gratitude goes out to:

- DG B.R. Sridhar, District 3191, for his leadership and vision;
- Arini Ghosh, Incoming President of Rotary Club Bangalore Social, for her energy and coordination;
- Rtn. Dr. Rukmangada Babu, Rotary Club Bangalore Vidyaleeta, for his dedication on the ground;

- Rtn. Dr. Lokesh Gupta, for the tireless behind - the - scenes work that made everything run seamlessly — the kind of effort that rarely gets seen but is always felt;

Days like this remind me why I believe so deeply in the power of Rotary and of international cooperation. We are not simply administering vaccines. We are protecting a generation — and reaffirming, in the most concrete way possible, that the fight to #EndPolio is a fight none of us intends to abandon until it is truly won.





POLIO GLOBAL ERADICATION INITIATIVE **HIGH-LEVEL INTERVIEW**

“Since 1988, GPEI has immunized over 3 billion children, reduced polio cases by 99.9%, eradicated two types of wild poliovirus, and 20 million people are walking today who would have been paralyzed by polio. That is the impact of partnerships in improving public health.”



Mike McGovern

Chair of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's Polio Oversight Board

Chair of Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee

Africa Kicks Out Wild Polio



PRID Tony Serrano recognising President Mandela

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative joins the millions around the world who mourned Nelson Mandela's passing on December 5, 2013, at the age of 95. He passed away at his home in Houghton, Johannesburg. The children of the world have another reason to be grateful to Mandela: he was a great champion of polio eradication, not only in his own country, but across the African continent. "Madiba", as he was reverentially known, was instrumental in kicking off South Africa's polio eradication efforts in the mid-1990s. On World Health Day in April 1995, he announced that South Africa was throwing its support behind the notion of a world without polio. The following year, he was there in 1996 at the launch of the 'Kick Polio out of Africa' campaign. Commending the efforts of health workers across Africa for the work they had done in reducing polio case numbers, he urged them to keep going until polio is defeated: "Our aim is not merely to reduce the numbers afflicted – it is to eliminate the



disease completely. No country can be safe from this disease until the whole world is rid of it. For it can cross borders with ease," he told the assembled crowd.

At the time, wild polio paralysed 75,000 children each year. To protect communities from this crippling disease, African leaders, health workers, volunteers, parents, global donors and organizations united to reach every child with polio vaccines.

On 25 August 2020, after four years without a single case of wild polio, the African region has been certified free of wild poliovirus. Decades of extraordinary investment by Rotary and its partners, have paid off. Yet, the job is not finished. These efforts must continue to prevent wild polio from returning and to end all forms of polio for good – both in Africa and globally.

<https://share.google/GGpgDn6ekHqVeKGcd>



Mandela Day 2026: “It’s still in our hands to fight poverty and inequality”

By Pierangelo Panozzo

On 18 July the world pays tribute to Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, born in 1918 in the Transkei and now a universal symbol of the struggle against apartheid, of national reconciliation and of human dignity. But Mandela Day is not a simple commemoration: it is a call to act. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2009 and first observed in 2010, Nelson Mandela International Day translates every year into a concrete call to action, symbolically measured in 67 minutes of community service, one for each of the 67 years Mandela devoted to the cause of social justice.

The 2026 theme: “It’s still in our hands”
This year the General Assembly and the Nelson Mandela Foundation chose as their guiding theme “It’s still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity”, an explicit echo of Mandela’s own words when he denounced the scourge of destitution and marginalisation. In presenting the 2026 edition, the South African government recalled how this message remains at the heart of collective action to tackle poverty, fight inequality and build a society founded on justice, at a time when social exclusion and widening economic gaps are once again threatening the cohesion of many democracies.

The timing of this edition is no accident. The Nelson Mandela Foundation notes that we live in an increasingly polarised world in which inequity continues to grow and in which new forms of polarisation, populism and dispossession are emerging, compounded by climate change, war and conflict, which are driving the displacement and impoverishment of entire communities.

This appeal carries particular weight in South Africa itself, where, more than three decades after the end of apartheid, some of the highest levels of social disparity in the world persist, and large segments of the population continue to live in economic vulnerability, facing unequal access to education, employment and essential services.

The 67 minutes and the meaning of the gesture
The symbolic heart of the day remains the invitation to dedicate 67 minutes to an act of volunteering, one minute of service for each of the 67 years Mandela spent fighting for social justice. It is not a purely symbolic gesture: since 2015 the General Assembly has extended the day’s scope to also promote humane conditions of imprisonment and to value the work of prison staff as a social service, giving rise to what became known as the “Nelson Mandela Rules” on the treatment of prisoners.



A Bridge Between Rotary Clubs Worldwide: ICC and GOLA Join Forces for Organ Donation

By Pierangelo Panozzo

An institutional meeting was held at the Bangalore City Club between Anil Srivatsa, founder of the Gift of Life Adventure Foundation (GOLA), and Jenny Elisabeth Bohlin, Section Chair ICC for India. At the heart of the discussion was Srivatsa's upcoming international mission, which will bring the GOLA initiative to Europe and West Africa with the aim of strengthening its human, institutional, and international impact.

This meeting follows another milestone that is set to leave a profound mark on the recent history of international Rotary: the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ICC Executive Council and GOLA, the non-profit organization founded by Srivatsa to accelerate awareness, advocacy, and philanthropy related to organ donation worldwide.

This is not a simple formal protocol, but the concrete foundation of an unprecedented Rotary project in terms of the breadth of its vision: uniting Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs across every continent around a single stated goal — ensuring that, by 2050, no one dies while waiting for an organ or a transplant. The agreement brings together the expertise and contacts of the ICC

Executive Council, a bridge among intercountry committees worldwide, with GOLA's on-the-ground experience: awareness campaigns, advocacy efforts for laws more favorable to transplant patients, and the strengthening of healthcare capacity in regions where citizens today are forced to seek treatment abroad, adding financial cost to their suffering. Behind the signing of this agreement and the new expansion lies a personal story worth remembering. Anil Srivatsa donated a kidney to his brother, neurosurgeon Arjun Srivatsa, in 2014, and since then has turned his personal experience into a global campaign. He has traveled through dozens of countries — driving his own car across nearly one hundred nations, a milestone reached in Dresden in August 2025 — to share his story and dispel the myths and prejudices that still hinder living organ donation today. Along the way, he has held more than a thousand public talks. From the press conference at the British House of Commons that launched the Million Donor Project, to the app connecting donors with their families, to founding the world's first Rotary club devoted entirely to promoting this cause (chartered in March 2022 by then RI President Shekhar Mehta in Uttar Pradesh), Srivatsa has turned adventure into a tool for international awareness.

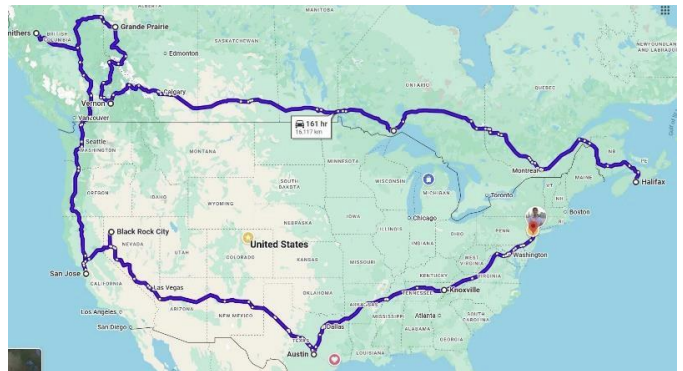


He even took his fight all the way to India's courts, helping to remove regulatory obstacles that prevented thousands of patients from accessing transplants. This meeting with Bohlin marks a further step in this direction, bringing InterCountry Committee support alongside the initiative as it enters its next international phase. The decision to extend its reach to West Africa fits within an already proven trajectory: over the years, Srivatsa has built a network of Rotary clubs and partner hospitals across multiple continents, and entry into a new geographic region represents a natural expansion of his mission of "Uniting Rotary For Organ Donation."

Heartfelt thanks go to those who made this agreement possible through energy, vision, and dedication: to Annemarie Mostert, President of the ICC Executive Council for the 2026-2028 biennium, who steered the process of bringing the two organizations together with great

determination, and to Anil Srivatsa, whose tireless personal mission is today a shared legacy for thousands of Rotarians around the world.

This is the current mission starting July 11, 2026 raising funds for the LIFT UP project to fund kidney transplants for women and children living below the poverty line but have willing family organ donors. This is slated for the 3rd Global Grant application where in the first two 14 transplants were funded and the goal is to fund 100.



Rotary Responds: Supporting Families Affected by the Venezuela Disaster

Rotary's commitment to helping communities in times of crisis is once again making a difference.

Following the devastating disaster in Venezuela that has displaced thousands of families, Rotarians are mobilizing to provide both immediate relief and long-term recovery support.

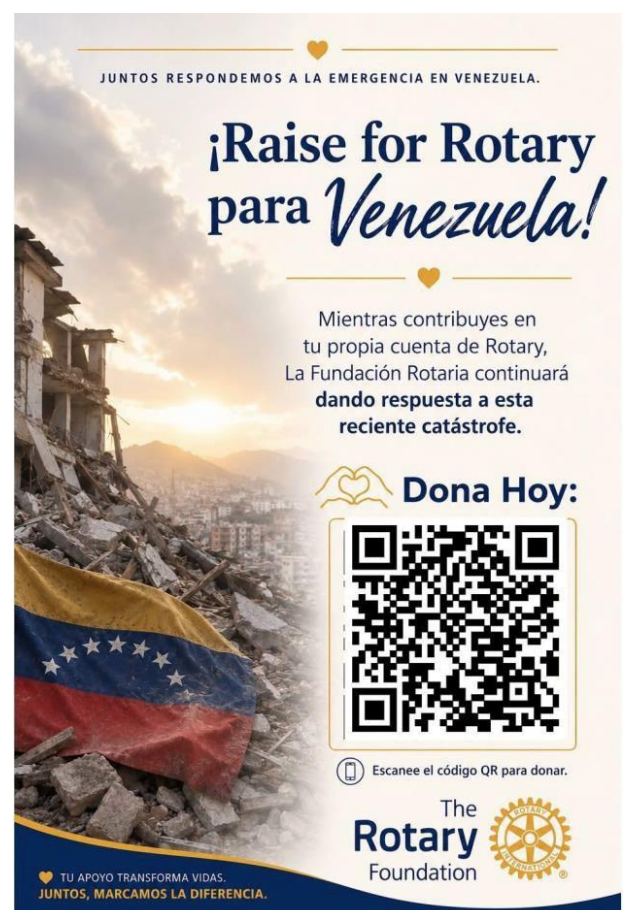
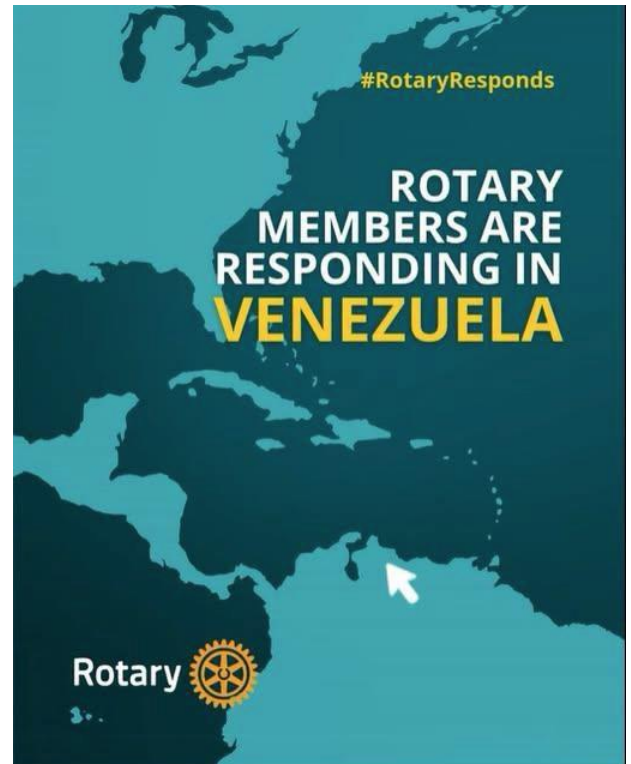
Rotary is responding to the urgent humanitarian needs in Venezuela through the Rotary Disaster Response Fund, providing grants that empower local Rotary clubs and districts to deliver aid where it's needed most. Support the Rotary Disaster Response Fund and help bring hope to communities in need: on.rotary.org/4hOz9Sz

ShelterBox, Rotary's trusted disaster relief partner, is providing emergency shelter and essential household supplies to families who have lost everything. These life-saving resources help families find safety, dignity, and hope as they begin rebuilding their lives. <https://shelterbox.org/wher.../venezuela-earthquake-rot-int/>

At the same time, Rotary District 4380, in collaboration with Rotary International, is accepting monetary donations to help deliver critical assistance to those impacted by the disaster. These funds will support relief efforts where they are needed most and assist communities as they recover. <https://rotaryforvenezuela.org/> Rotary has a long history of responding when disasters strike, and this is another opportunity for our global family to come together in Service Above Self.

If you are able, please consider making a financial contribution to either ShelterBox or Rotary District 4380. Every donation—no matter the size—helps provide emergency relief, shelter, and hope to families facing unimaginable challenges.

Together, we can demonstrate the power of Rotary to make a lasting impact when it matters most.



ICC Poland-Slovenia-North Macedonia (ICC PSM): Birth and a Spectacular Launch!

By Mateo Karczmarszuk - President, ICC PSM - Lublin - Centrum RC - Chairman of International Cooperation Committee

ICC PSM was formally established less than three months ago — on May 15, 2026, in Lublin (Poland) in the presence of Annemarie Mostert, and immediately began its operations.

1. Through the initiative of Mateo Karczmarszuk (President of this ICC for Poland) and Luka Tomazic (President of this ICC for Slovenia), working relationships were established between Alma Mater Europea University in Maribor, Slovenia, and WSPA University (University of Business and Administration) in Lublin. (The attached photo shows Prof. Maia Mazur, Rector, and Małgorzata Michalska, Vice-Rector of WSPA, alongside Luka Tomazic, Vice - Rector of Alma Mater Europea, and Mateo.) A fruitful, long-term collaboration is in prospect.

2. Luka Tomazic and Mateo Karczmarszuk attended the prestigious Three Seas Congress, held in Lublin at the end of May. The event brought together hundreds of local government representatives from 14 countries situated between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas. We established numerous valuable contacts for cross-border cooperation across various fields. (Pictured: Mateo and Luka)

3. "Wheelchairs for Macedonians in Need". The photo shows the first wheelchairs acquired, awaiting transport to Macedonia).

Toni Dovenski-President of the ICC in subject for Macedonia), Luka Tomazic, and Mateo are in constant communication regarding the project. Toni identified an urgent need in Macedonia to assist people with disabilities, seniors, and those with orthopedic conditions by improving their mobility. Consequently, the Rotary Club Lublin-Centrum will acquire approximately 20 new wheelchairs and deliver them to the Rotary Club Kumanovoin Macedonia (Toni Dovenski's club), where local Rotarians will distribute them

to those in need at their discretion. We aim to complete this project within the nearest six weeks and will provide you regular updates on its progress



Strengthening Bonds Between India and South Africa

by **Shereen Hunter**

South African Rotarians were honoured to welcome Rotary International Director Flt. Lt. K.P. Nagesh and his family to Johannesburg in May 2026, following his attendance at a Rotary engagement in Cape Town as the Rotary International President's Personal Representative.

RID Nagesh was accompanied by his wife, Uma Nagesh; their daughter, Nidhi Nagesh; and his personal assistant, Nikitha. During their three-day Johannesburg visit, the delegation was hosted by ICC Executive Council President PDG Annemarie Mostert, Past Assistant Governor Hans Mostert and ICC Committee Member AG Shereen Hunter. The programme combined Rotary fellowship, cultural experiences, project visits and meaningful conversations about strengthening relations between India and Africa through Intercountry Committees.

A particularly significant part of the visit was the delegation's experience at Sanctuary Mandela, where the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela provided an important South African context for discussions about leadership, peace and service. The delegation also visited Satyagraha House, the Johannesburg home associated with Mahatma Gandhi and the development of his philosophy of non-violent resistance. Together, the two heritage experiences highlighted the historic connection between India and South Africa and the enduring legacies of Gandhi and Mandela.

The delegation was introduced to the Rotary Foundation supported greenhouse and aquaponics training project in Randburg. Established through a Rotary Global Grant, the facility demonstrates how practical training, food security and sustainable development can create lasting opportunities for communities.

Another highlight was a visit to the BAPS Hindu Mandir and Cultural Complex in Northriding. The impressive complex provided a familiar cultural connection for the Indian visitors while illustrating Johannesburg's rich diversity and the contribution of the Indian community to South African society.

RID Nagesh brings an extraordinary record of leadership to Rotary. A former Indian Air

Force officer, entrepreneur, educator and social activist, he has created employment for thousands of people and established vocational training opportunities for rural youth.

He also has a passion for cricket, and a stop at Johannesburg's Wanderers Cricket Stadium, where a large mural of Sachin Tendulkar welcomed him, provided another magical moment. He served as District Governor of Rotary International District 3190 and was elected Rotary International Director for 2025-2027.

More than a sightseeing programme, the visit demonstrated the true value of ICC relationships, building trust, deepening cultural understanding and creating connections that can lead to future collaboration and service. The warmth shared between the visitors and their South African hosts reflected Rotary at its best; friendship across borders, united by a common commitment to service and peace.





Welcome the Rome, Italy Section, D2080 of the International Fellowship of Rotarians Musicians (IFRM)

by Rtn. Fabio Massimo Aureli Chairman IFRM Section of Rome, D2080

MUSIC UNITES, ROTARY INSPIRES !The birth of the Rome, Italy Section, D2080 of IFRM, dearest friends, is a real demonstration of the power and of the magic of Rotary, thank to the fundamental contribution of the Rotarians, Jenny Elisabeth Bohlin, Section Chair ICC for Italy, Malta, San Marino - India, and the precious supervision of the Rotarian, Sanjeev Sethi, Advisor IFRM India Section Head-Bolivia ICC, that generously, last June, proposed me to become the Chairman of IFRM Section of Rome D2080.

I immediately accepted the challenge and asked kindly to my best friends, Music Lovers, mainly Rotarians and Rotaractors, beginning with my second daughter, Rotaractor Angelica Aureli, harpist and singer, ending to my not Rotarians and Musicians best friends to join in the IFRM Section of Rome D2080. The most part of them, around twenty persons, answered positively to my request and on the seventh of July we were formally recognized as Rome IFRM Section, D2080, by the Board of IFRM and His Global Chair, D3206, Rotarian Padmanabhan Iyer.

The main purpose of our Section will be to promote the use and appreciation of all kinds of Music in Rotary and Rotaract Clubs by Rotarians and Rotaractors, creating Harmony and bringing Peace with Music Projects and Concerts, mainly youth-oriented, in Rome, in the Rotary District and around the World, opened to a positive contamination and mutual exchange and contribution with other different music traditions. The highest and final our objective, in accordance with IFRM Mission,

will be encourage world understanding that Music is a sublime universal language, that inspires peaceful coexistence among people.

Said Rtn. Fabio Massimo Aureli Chairman IFRM Section of Rome, D2080 "Music must raise our gaze to the sky and open in our heart the door of Beauty and Harmony. We will begin with a Symphonic Concert with Choir and Orchestra in Rome for Christmas, bringing a message of Peace to all the peoples of good will in the world.

Long live IFRM! Long life Rotary and Rotaract!"



Celebrating Harmony.
Launching Friendship.

LAUNCH OF IFRM ROME

**A NEW CHAPTER OF SERVICE
THROUGH MUSIC & FELLOWSHIP**

**Music Unites.
Rotary Inspires.**

With immense joy, we welcome the Rome, Italy Chapter, RID 2080 of the International Fellowship of Rotarian Musicians (IFRM). Here's to creating harmony through friendship and service.



Rtn. Padmanabhan Iyer (Paddy)
Global Chair IFRM International,
RID 3206, Rotary Club of
Coimbatore Aram,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.



Rtn. Fabio Massimo Aureli
Chairman, IFRM,
RID 2080



Rtn. Jenny Elisabeth Bohlin
President,
ICC, Italy, Malta, San Marino, India
Advisor, IFRM
RC Rome, RID 2080, Italy



Rtn. Sanjeev Sethi
Advisor, IFRM,
India Section Head - Bolivia
(South America)
Inter Country Committee (ICC)
PP, RC Yamunanagar Riviera,
RID 3080 Haryana, India



ICC: The Strategic Network That Can Transform Rotary's Impact

by Alberto Guerra - ICC Portugal Chair (2023-26) - ICC Expansion Workgroup - ICC Portugal-South Africa Chair

The Strategic Value of ICCs

In an era marked by increasing global interconnectedness and growing complexity, Rotary International recognizes the unique network characteristics of the ICC as an important district resource. This network adds value to the experience of Rotarians and Rotaractors, giving greater reach and impact to the actions developed in each district by the Clubs and facilitating and enhancing the work of the Governor.

Current Situation, Perception, and Need for Change

In February 2026, there were 721 National Sections, spread across 108 countries and 34 Rotary zones.

We know that in some of these areas, activity related to the ICC is incipient. Some districts know nothing about the ICC. Some Governors-Elect have no interest in learning about the ICC. The Rotary world's perception of ICCs is still insufficient. Many Rotarians and Rotaractors are unaware of the possibilities that the ICC offers to their activities, which means that clubs, districts, and Governors do not fully utilize this resource for the benefit of their Rotary work. It's time to change this status quo.

A decisive Moment.

Throughout the history of organizations - and also in the history of our lives - there are decisions that, among many others, take on a decisive significance. As Stefan Zweig reminds us in *The Great Moments in Human History*, certain moments emerge with a transformative force and come to occupy a central place in the course of events.

The structural ecosystem created by the new Presidency of the ICC executive committee was designed to change this situation. We feel that this is the moment.

How will we proceed?:

We believe that the core of the problem has two aspects: The Clubs and the Governors.

1. Clubs need to be informed about how they can use the approximately 750 international sections of the ICC to help them find:
 - International partners for their projects
 - Technology that allows Clubs to develop more ambitious projects
 - Funding for projects, in addition to TRF
 - Help to learn how to choose projects and the procedures to apply for grants
 - Rotaractors participating in this development.

ICC ACTUAL SITUATION

721 National Sections – 108 Countries – 34 Rotary zones

- 89 Africa
- 148 Asia
- 419 Europe
- 28 North America
- 36 South America
- 1 Australia

Feb. 2026

2. Governors should prioritize contacts with ICC District Chairs and realize that, since the ICC is a District resource, the work of the Clubs, the District, and the Governor is enhanced by ICC participation. It is suggested that a working group be created in the district to coordinate and streamline these processes, which include:

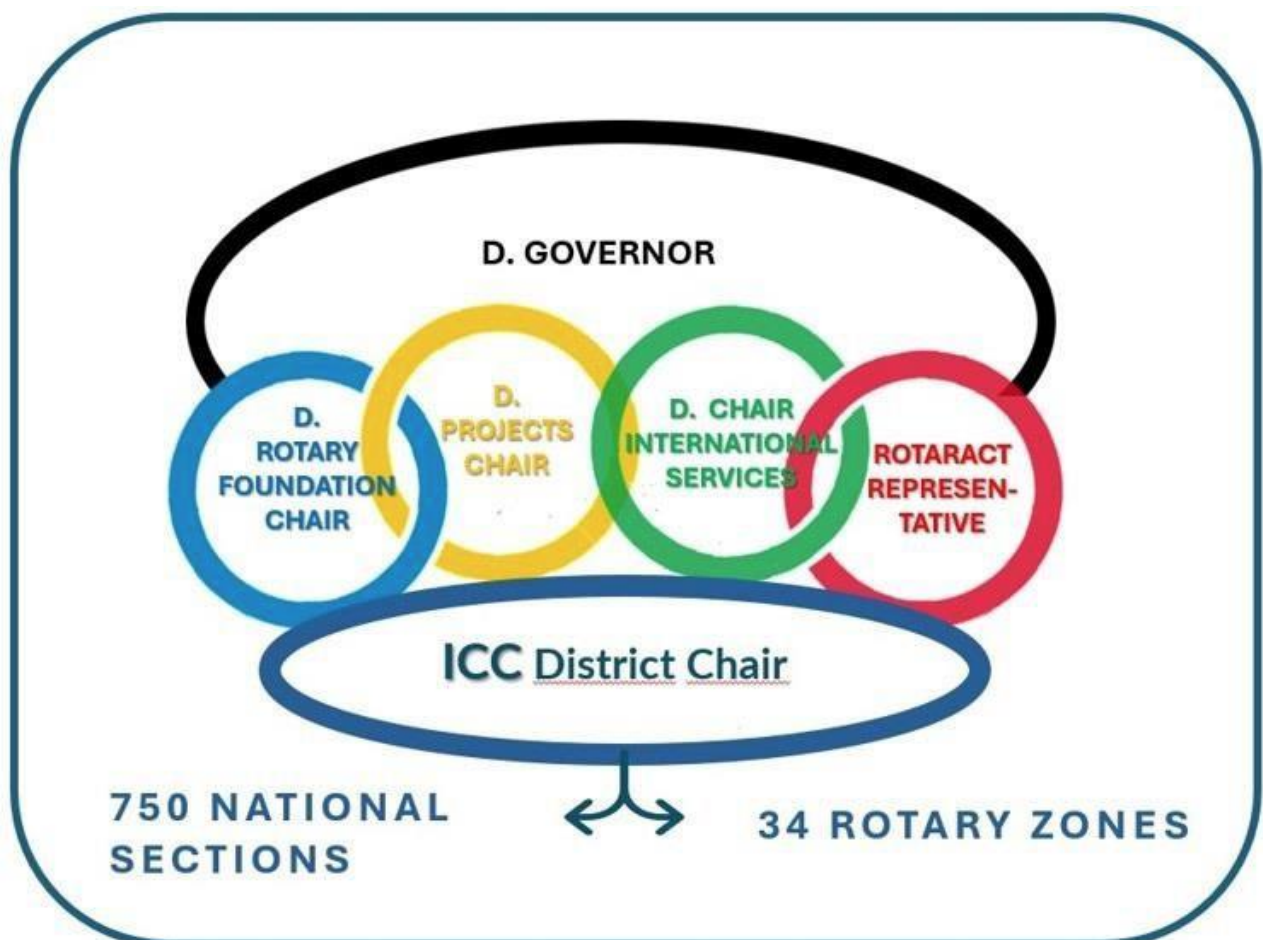
- District Project Chair
- District TRF Chair
- District Chair International Service;
- Rotaract Representative;
- ICC District Chair.

In this way, it will be possible to mobilize the entire network that ICCs provide for the benefit of the Clubs and the District.

The deep, stable, and trust-based international relationships that ICCs provide allow for a rapid response to crises, facilitate the execution of complex projects, and build lasting cultural understanding. Unlike one-off international partnerships, ICCs offer institutional memory, proven paths of collaboration, and networks that span generations of Rotarians.

It is this vibrant internationality, this capacity for connection, and this strength of cooperation that clearly remind us why we belong to Rotary International.

Ultimately ICC constitute opportunities without limit



A Bowl of Ukrainian borscht – A Small Gesture That Meant More Than a Thousand Words

by PDG Andrzej Ludek, Past President of ICC Executive Council (2016-2018)

After the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, Poland found itself in the very center of the biggest humanitarian crisis that Europe has experienced since the end of World War II. It was the end of February 2022. The middle of the European winter. The frost at night fell below zero, and the piercing wind intensified the feeling of cold. A stream of people was constantly flowing through the border crossings from Ukraine to Poland. They were not tourists or people going to work. These were mothers carrying sleeping children in their arms, grandmothers leading their grandchildren by the hand, young women pulling suitcases packed in a hurry, and elderly people who all their lives did not think that they would become refugees in their old age. Most of the men stayed in Ukraine.

On the Ukrainian side of the border, scenes that are impossible to forget took place. Fathers said goodbye to their wives and children, knowing that they might see them for the last time. A few years old children did not understand why their father did not get on the bus. Mothers hid their tears in an attempt to keep calm for their children. Many families were separated in just a few minutes. And no one knew where he would go on the other side of the border.

Hundreds of thousands of such people came to Poland every day. Help had to be created immediately. There was no time for procedures or long deliberations. Local governments, non-governmental organizations, parishes, schools, companies, firefighters, scouts and ordinary residents have launched the largest spontaneous humanitarian aid campaign in the modern history of Poland. Thousands of families have opened the doors of their homes to complete strangers. Sports halls were turned into accommodation, restaurants cooked meals for free, drivers picked up refugees from stations around the clock and drove them to safe places.

No one asked about nationality, views or religion. The most important thing was one thing –to help.

In our Rotary Club Warszawa City, the day after the outbreak of the war, we established the club's Committee for Aid to Ukraine. Each subsequent hour brought new calls and new requests for support. We organized housing, transport, food, clothing and hygiene products. However, we knew that thousands of people come to Warsaw every day after a multi-day journey and the first thing they need is warmth.



Not just a warm room. Not just a blanket. Also a hot meal that will make you feel safe at least for a moment.

One of the most important places on the map of Warsaw has become the Warszawa Zachodnia bus station. It was here that hundreds of buses and trains from the border crossing arrived every day. The City of Warsaw immediately built a heated reception pavilion. Volunteers served hot meals, doctors provided first aid, psychologists talked to children, and city employees directed refugees to the apartments of Warsaw residents, who offered their homes without a moment's hesitation.

It was this image that I saw on television. The cook poured more portions of hot soup. I looked at the screen and wondered what I could do. On a daily basis, I manage the Institute of Consumer Sensory Research, so we have a professionally equipped kitchen. At the same time, I was working on a book dedicated to soups, "Andre's World of Soups". I was increasingly fascinated by the fact that in every culture there are dishes that are much more than food. They are a symbol of home, childhood and a sense of security.

by PDG AndrzejLudek, Past President of ICC



Executive Council (2016-2018)

In Poland, such a soup is broth (chicken bouillon). It's the taste of a family home. The taste of Sunday dinner. A taste of returning after a long journey. From consumer research that I once conducted, I know that for most Poles there is no more homemade soup. I always know that when I come back from abroad, my mother will be waiting for me with a plate of hot chicken broth.

I thought then: And what soup gives Ukrainians the same sense of home? The answer was obvious. Ukrainian borscht. Not just beetroot soup, but a symbol of Ukrainian culture, inscribed by UNESCO on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Protection.

We made the decision immediately. I asked Aliona Shpak from our Rotary club, who comes from Ukraine, and a notary from Odessa, who herself fled to Poland just a few days earlier, to help prepare real Ukrainian borscht.

It was not easy. Every Ukrainian family has its own recipe and everyone considers it the best. After a few hours of cooking, we had forty liters of borscht ready. We also packed fresh bread and cream and set off for Warsaw West.

On the spot, it turned out that there was a huge traffic around the station. Police officers were driving cars and there was practically nowhere to park. When they heard that we had brought borscht for refugees, they gave us their own parking space without a moment's hesitation. "We can do without parking space for a while," they said.

This is what Poland looked like then. Everyone helped as much as they could.

The hall was very crowded. The cook looked into our pot. "We already have a lot of tomato soup," he said with a smile. "But borscht will also come in handy. I handed him five loaves of sliced bread and a five-liter bucket of cream. Everyone should add one or two table spoons to their portion.

He laughed. "Sir, we don't have time for such ceremonies here. The easiest way will be to pour everything into the pot. I replied almost imploringly: "Please don't do that. In Ukraine, borscht is eaten in this way. He agreed. After a few minutes, he returned. "You were right, it works," he said. "Everyone puts cream exactly the way they like. The news that real Ukrainian borscht was served spread quickly. Not even an hour passed, and the whole forty liters disappeared.

The tomato soup was still waiting.

However, I remember an older woman the most. She served borscht to her daughter and two granddaughters. She looked at them with tears in her eyes and said quietly:

Look... The Poles even thought about welcoming us with Ukrainian borscht.

The cook who was standing next to me pointed at me. "It was this gentleman who cooked it. The woman came up and hugged me tightly. She said that they had escaped from the Sumy area. They spent five days on the road. All this time, they ate mostly sandwiches and drank water. They arrived in Warsaw extremely exhausted.

I will never forget that moment. Then I understood that humanitarian aid is not just a roof over your head, medicine or a hot meal. It is also respect for another person.

For his language. For his tradition. For the memories he had to leave behind. Forty liters of borscht could not stop the war. But for people who had just lost their home, one bowl of this soup said more than a thousand words. "You are safe here. We know who you are. You are welcome here."

Today, in retrospect, I think that an agreement between nations is not always born during conferences, debates or the signing of international agreements. Sometimes it starts with one simple gesture. From a bowl of hot borscht.

This day makes it clear that Service Above Self does not always require big projects. Sometimes it is enough to see what the other person really needs.

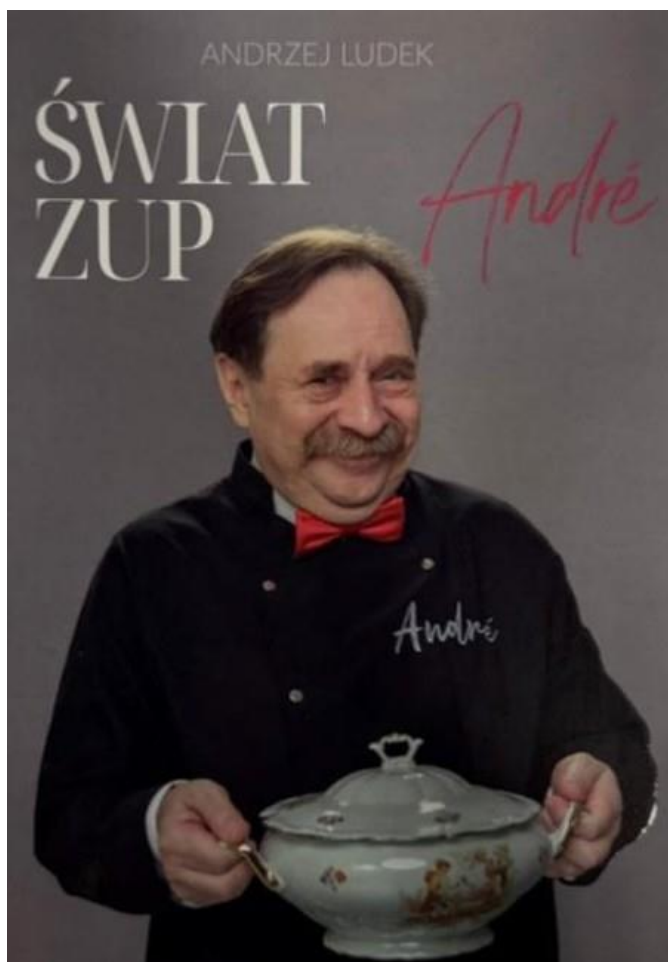


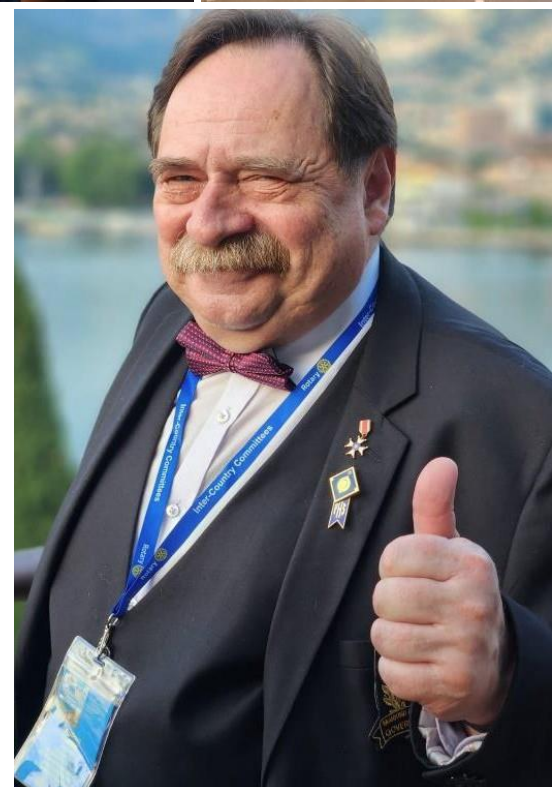
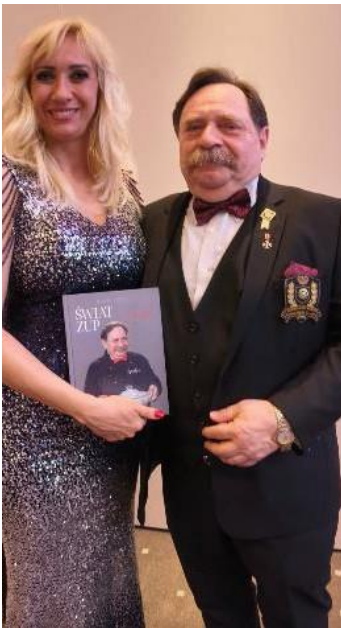
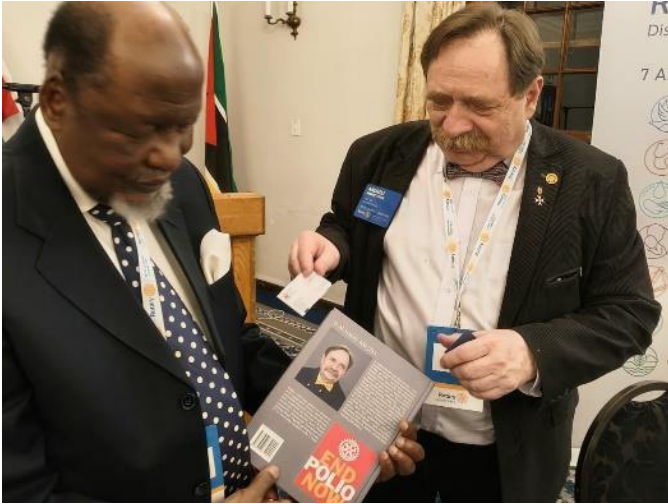
Andrzej Ludek's "Andre's World of Soups"

"Świat Zup André" (André's World of Soups) is a culinary book by Polish author and Rotarian Andrzej "André" Ludek, celebrating the rich diversity of soups from Poland and around the world. The book is much more than a traditional cookbook, combining carefully selected recipes with the history, culture, and traditions behind some of the world's most beloved soups. Developed over several years, it reflects the author's passion for cooking and his belief that food has the power to bring people together.

In addition to detailed recipes, the publication includes instructional videos accessible via QR codes, making it an interactive resource for both experienced cooks and beginners.

Every book sold, or received as a gift, contributed to End Polio Now





Building Bridges of Friendship and Cooperation Beyond Borders: The "Rotary Citadels" Mission Connects Greece and Romania

By ARPIC Elena Janniki District 2475 - Greece

The Greece-Romania Intercountry Committees (ICC) has successfully concluded its "Rotary Citadels" mission. At the beginning of July 2026, a delegation of 24 Rotarians and friends representing nine Greek Rotary Clubs completed an impactful cultural and fellowship journey across Romania.

Led by the newly inaugurated District Governor of District 2475, Haralampos Tiginagas, the expedition traveled through Bucharest, Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia, establishing a strong foundation for future international collaboration. The mission served as a vital platform for cross-border institutional cooperation, resulting in two major international twinings:

- RC Kifissia Politeia (Greece) officially partnered with RC Targu Neamt Cetatea Neamtului (Romania).
- RC Heraklion-N. Kazantzakis (Greece) established an official alliance with RC Bucharest Okto(Romania).

These new twinings aim to facilitate long-term collaborative community service projects

and cultural exchanges between the two nations. By ARPIC Elena Janniki District 2475 -Greece Highlighting Rotary's commitment to youth development and the arts, students from the Komotini Art High School in Greece attended an international painting camp in Slănic Moldova, Romania.

This initiative demonstrates how regional Rotary initiatives can fuel international youth opportunities, while their participation was made possible by the proceeds of the "Nature –Culture –Life" Photography Festival of District 2475. The logistics and itinerary were orchestrated by RC Kifisia-Politeia, with the organizational support provided by the Greece-Romania Intercountry Committees.

Special recognition and institutional gratitude are extended to:

- Christina Kartsiotou and Sever Ciubuca, Chairs of the Greece- Romania ICC, for their leadership.
- Cristian Liviu Ilie, District Governor of District 2241, for his support.



At the Inspiring Taipei, Convention, The Intercountry Committee Takes Centre Stage in Strengthening Friendship Between Italy, Malta, San Marino and Taiwan

by Carlo Severa Italy–Malta–San Marino and Taiwan Intercountry Committee Chair

The Rotary International Convention in Taipei was an intense and inspiring experience for Italian Rotarians, combining the institutional significance of the event with the joy of meeting, sharing and building new connections. The Italian delegation, which included a strong representation from District 2080 as well as members from other districts across the country, took part in several days of plenary sessions, learning opportunities, meetings with Rotarians from around the world and moments of genuine fellowship.

One of the most moving highlights was the traditional Flag Ceremony. As the Italian Tricolor appeared on the large screen, Francesco Arezzo, President of Rotary International for 2025–2026, entered the hall proudly carrying the Italian flag. The notes of *Il Canto degli Italiani*, Italy's national anthem, echoed throughout the venue before the worldwide Rotary family, making the occasion even more solemn and unforgettable for everyone in the Italian delegation.

Yet the most authentic memories of Taipei were created above all through the encounters that took place in the shared space of the House of Friendship. The exchange of experiences and projects, together with the opportunity to meet fellow Rotarians from every part of the world, once again demonstrated Rotary's extraordinary ability to overcome geographical distances, language barriers and cultural differences. In the spirit of the "Year of Us", which shaped the Rotary year in District 2080 under the leadership of Governor Adriana Muscas, the Taiwanese Rotarians truly became friends to all, confirming Rotary's unique ability to make its members feel at home wherever they may be in the world.

Among the most significant events held during the Convention was the dinner on 15 June,



jointly organised by the Italian and Taiwanese sections of the Italy–Malta–San Marino and Taiwan Intercountry Committees.

The evening provided Rotarians from the two countries with a valuable opportunity to deepen their mutual understanding, strengthen existing relationships and lay the foundations for new forms of cooperation. In a warm and engaging atmosphere, the gathering gave tangible expression to the mission of Rotary Intercountry Committees: building bridges between different communities and cultures, encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding, and promoting the development of joint initiatives.

Around the dinner table, the geographical distance between Italy and Taiwan gave way to a shared closeness of values, experiences and aspirations, together with a strong commitment to continuing their work side by side. The dinner was therefore far more than an enjoyable social occasion. It became a genuine celebration of international Rotary fellowship and of Rotary's ability to transform personal encounters into lasting relationships and meaningful opportunities for service.

Special thanks are due to PDG Jack Hsieh, Chair of the Taiwanese Section of the Intercountry Committees, for his generous hospitality, warm welcome and dedicated commitment to coordinating the evening together with the Taiwanese Rotarians in attendance. His thoughtful attention to the Italian delegation and his steadfast support for the Committee's activities made the gathering even more meaningful, strengthening a bond of friendship that is certain to endure well beyond the days of the Taipei Convention.



Beyond Our Own Rotary: How ICC Netherlands Is Turning International Friendship into Visible Action

by Jan de Mooij – National Chair, ICC Netherlands

From an apple tree planted for Ukraine to culinary fundraisers for Indonesia, from a new partnership with Poland to discussions on digital healthcare with Italy: the Dutch Intercountry Committees are becoming an increasingly lively network of friendship, knowledge and service. Dear ICC members and readers.

The Rotary year 2025–2026 has been a turning point for ICC Netherlands. Together with our board and the enthusiastic teams behind the different country committees, we have achieved a great deal. Connection, peace and the promotion of friendship have been at the heart of everything we do.

I continue to be struck by the strong need for contact between Rotarians in different countries. Alongside the many valuable initiatives within individual clubs, there is a world beyond our own Rotary club. That is precisely what makes the Intercountry Committees unique: they bring people together across borders, create lasting relationships and turn international friendship into meaningful action.

The official establishment of two new ICCs this year —Netherlands–Italy, Malta and San Marino on 8 April, and Netherlands–Poland on 16 May — showed once again what Rotary can achieve when we look beyond national borders. It is wonderful to see Rotarians and other interested people finding one another, forming new teams and developing concrete initiatives together. We are also working towards the establishment of an ICC with Great Britain and Ireland.

We are also strengthening our visibility. The ICC Netherlands website will become a welcoming central hub where people can discover our committees, projects, events and stories. In September, the Rotary European

Action Summit in Rotterdam will offer another exceptional opportunity to experience Rotary beyond one's own club. by Jan de Mooij–National Chair, ICC Netherlands
Beyond Our Own Rotary: How ICC Netherlands Is Turning International Friendship into Visible Action

The Rotary European Action Summit, taking place in Rotterdam from 11 to 13 September 2026, will provide a natural meeting point for this expanding network. Under the theme “To Belong”, Rotarians and Rotaractors will explore low literacy, mental health and sustainability, while meeting international friends and discovering opportunities beyond their own clubs. An international ICC gathering may also take place on 12 September. Registration can be done via: www.rotary-european-action-summit.com

Together with Ebed Litaay, our secretary, and Gianvittorio Zandonà, our treasurer, I look back with pride — but, above all, I look forward. With your support, commitment and enthusiasm, we can make the coming Rotary year even more meaningful. Together, we continue to shape our mission in the spirit of Paul Harris.

A network in motion

When the first issue of Connected appeared in December 2025, ICC Netherlands was still at the beginning of a new chapter. Germany, Indonesia, Russia and Ukraine were named as the existing Dutch ICC relationships. At the same time, teams were being formed around

Italy, Poland, Austria, Great Britain and Ireland, and peace-related cooperation. There was also an ambition to revive the relationship with Suriname. Less than a year later, two of those initiatives have received their charters, another is approaching establishment, and projects are increasingly moving from conversations to action.

Ukraine: friendship that does not turn away Perhaps nowhere is the purpose of an ICC more tangible than in the relationship between the Netherlands and Ukraine. Its story can be told through one small apple tree. The tree was donated when ICC Netherlands–Ukraine was established on 24 February 2024 and later became the first tree planted in the new Rotary Food Forest in Sluiskil. In peaceful surroundings, it now represents a friendship shaped by the harsh reality of war—but also by hope, growth and the conviction that something new can emerge from devastated ground.

That friendship became deeply personal during the Netherlands–Ukraine meeting in Warsaw in November 2025. Ukrainian Rotarians travelled from heavily affected regions such as Kharkiv, Dnipro and Kyiv. They spoke about nights filled with bombardments, damaged schools and hospitals, interrupted education and the daily strain of living under constant threat. The weekend brought new friendships, cultural encounters and concrete requests for cooperation. It also revealed how important twinning can be: Ukrainian clubs were not only looking for material assistance, but also for lasting contact and moral support from Dutch sister clubs.

By April, more than twenty service projects from that encounter were already being connected to Dutch Rotary clubs and districts. These included practical assistance, support for children and vulnerable families, and opportunities for longer-term club



partnerships. Another moving initiative raised more than €6,000 for Rotarian Dirk Lustig, who has visited children near the front as Saint Nicholas for many years, giving them a brief moment in which the war can fade into the background.

The latest chapter unfolded during the regional conference “Peace for Ukraine”, held in Lublin from 15 to 17 May 2026. Rotarians from twelve countries exchanged experiences and discussed ambulances, humanitarian transports and longer-term assistance. Letters of intent and cooperation agreements were signed between clubs and districts. The atmosphere was serious but hopeful—proof that friendship can remain warm even when the subjects discussed are painfully urgent. Indonesia: connection served at the table ICC Netherlands–Indonesia demonstrates that service can begin with an invitation to sit down, share food and listen to one another.

Three culinary events with Malaysian chef Norman Musa brought together cuisine, culture, music and fundraising. A seven-course gala dinner supported the Muliamanise Foundation in Bali, enabling children to continue online after-school lessons in English and computer programming. A second event in Rotterdam combined a six-course menu and book presentation with support for StichtingAvrasya, which works for the emancipation and integration of migrant women in the Netherlands. During a later visit to Rotary Club Gouda-Bloemendaal, fundraising supported Collective Minds, an organisation using sports coaching to give disadvantaged children better opportunities.

The partnership is also developing at an institutional level. Jan de Mooij and Ebed Litaaymet Indonesian Ambassador Laurentius Amrih Jinangkung introduced him to Rotary. The agreements were signed between clubs and districts. The atmosphere was serious but hopeful — proof that friendship can remain warm even when the subjects discussed are painfully urgent.

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The partnership is also developing at an institutional level. Jan de Mooij and Ebed Litaaymet Indonesian Ambassador Laurentius Amrih Jinangkung introduced him to Rotary, The Rotary Foundation and the potential of the ICC. The meeting created a promising basis for closer cooperation with the embassy and for new activities connecting the Netherlands and Indonesia. Italy, Malta and San Marino: people first in a digital age. On 8 April 2026, the new ICC between the Netherlands and Italy, Malta and San Marino was officially chartered. The online ceremony marked the conclusion of months of preparation by Dutch and Italian Rotarians and gave the partnership a formal foundation from which to grow.

Its direction is already distinctive. Instead of concentrating primarily on traditional infrastructure projects, the committee is developing professional and people-centred cooperation. Healthcare, artificial intelligence, digital medicine and the ethical use of innovation are central themes. A possible online dialogue would bring together experts and Rotarians to discuss healthcare models, vulnerable groups, sustainability and “digital humanism”: technology that continues to place people, rather than systems, at the centre.

The committee is also mapping professional expertise and areas of excellence in both countries. Through hosting, study visits, mentoring and network introductions, it hopes to connect professionals and identify suitable twin clubs. This is international vocational service in a very practical form: not simply exchanging business cards, but sharing knowledge that can improve lives.

Poland: a new bridge officially opened ICC Netherlands–Poland began with a clear ambition: to deepen understanding between two countries that already have many connections, yet do not always know each other well.

Large Polish communities live in the Netherlands, municipalities maintain twinning relationships, cultural exchanges take place, and Dutch and Polish organisations cooperate closely in supporting Ukraine. The ICC aims to build on these foundations by acting as a kind of “virtual embassy”: a forum for dialogue, cultural exchange, community projects and direct contacts between Rotary clubs.



That ambition became official on 16 May 2026, when the charter was signed during the international conference in Lublin. Dutch symbols — including a windmill, a flag and, to the delight of those present, cubes of Dutch cheese — added a light-hearted touch to an important occasion. Behind the ceremony stood a serious commitment: to create new friendships, open doors for joint projects and strengthen the relationship between Dutch and Polish clubs.

Peace: from fellowships to a worldwide youth network

Peace is not a separate, abstract subject within ICC Netherlands. It runs through almost every committee and project.

The peace programme has promoted Rotary Peace Fellowships and the Positive Peace Academy, which helps participants understand the conditions needed for peaceful and resilient societies. It has also encouraged Dutch Rotary districts to support Peace Fellows before, during and after their studies, helping them turn academic knowledge into practical work in their own countries.

During the ICC Peace & Earth Conference in Kraków from 8 to 10 May, peace was connected to environmental responsibility, inclusion, language, artificial intelligence and ethical leadership. The unveiling of a Peace Pole bearing the message “May Peace Prevail on Earth” offered a visible symbol of that commitment. Participants were also challenged not to remain silent, but to speak openly and consistently in favour of peace.

Another Peace Pole was unveiled during the Unite for Peace weekend at the Rotary Peace Center at Uppsala University. Dutch participants met Peace Fellows and donors from around the world and joined a peace walk exploring the legacies of Nobel Peace Prize winners. The lasting impression was not merely the formal programme, but the relationships formed across countries, cultures and languages.



The second Youth Peace Summit in The Hague brought this work to a new generation. From 17 to 19 June, 140 young peacebuilders from 61 countries gathered for workshops, dialogue and collaborative sessions based on the United Nations Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. Their Youth Peace Charter is now moving into its next phase, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed interest in using it to strengthen youth participation in peacebuilding. Preparations for the 2027 summit have already begun.

Great Britain and Ireland: a team taking shape
The next new ICC may connect the Netherlands with Great Britain and Ireland. Regular contact has been maintained since the beginning of 2026, and around eight Rotarians on the British and Irish side have already committed themselves.

A Dutch team is now being assembled. Possible areas of cooperation include End Plastic Soup, sanitation projects in Africa and work aimed at ending female genital mutilation. The subjects are varied, but the principle is the same: bring together people with complementary experience, agree on a practical goal and build a partnership capable of sustaining it. A charter may be possible in connection with the Rotary European Action Summit in Rotterdam.

Russia, Germany, Suriname and Austria: different stages of connection

Not every ICC relationship is developing under the same circumstances. The Netherlands–Russia committee, established in 2013, organised alternating activities, visits and projects in both countries until the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Its activities have since been formally suspended at the initiative of the Dutch section. The committee itself has not been dissolved, but any future reactivation will depend on developments surrounding the war and on a careful consideration of what responsible cooperation would mean.

Germany is identified as one of the existing Dutch ICC relationships, although the three newsletters reviewed do not include a separate update on German activities during this period. Austria remains an initiative under development. For Suriname, ICC Netherlands is seeking Rotarians and Rotaractors with relevant ties and experience to help re-charter the bilateral committee.

These different situations are part of an honest overview of the Dutch ICC landscape. Some committees are thriving, some have only just begun, some are looking for new members, and one is suspended because international friendship cannot be separated from international responsibility.

The next chapter: visible, accessible and national

The growth of ICC Netherlands also requires stronger foundations at home. The organisation has again been recognised by the Dutch governors as a national committee and aims to have active representation from all seven Rotary districts. A dedicated ICC section has been launched on the national Rotary website, and further improvements are planned: a clearer overview of the country committees, an accessible contact point, a central archive for newsletters and documents, and a simple reporting format through which volunteers can share the atmosphere and impact of events without creating unnecessary administrative work.

That, in the end, is the common thread running through every ICC: people meet, stories are exchanged and trust begins to grow. Sometimes the result is a charter. Sometimes it is a humanitarian transport, a new professional network, a Youth Peace Charter or a tree planted in Dutch soil.

Connection is the beginning. Friendship gives it strength. Action gives it meaning.

Bruno Scovazzi: A Life of Engineering, Leadership, and Rotary Service

Bruno Scovazzi, born in 1942 in Acqui Terme, Piedmont, Italy, earned his high school diploma from the Saracco Classical High School in Acqui Terme, then graduated in mechanical engineering at the Politecnico di Torino (Italy).

He worked for many years in an American company, first in the design of internal combustion engine testing systems, then in automotive quality control, and then moved into IT, eventually becoming Information Operating Manager in the European data processing center of this company.

The second part of his professional career developed in an Italian company in the publishing sector, focusing on work organization and the implementation of Personal Computing in a Local Area Network architecture for all of the company's Italian branches.

He married Giovanna in 1970 and has two sons, Guglielmo, a professor at Duke University (NC, USA) and Paolo, a vascular surgeon in Cuneo (Italy), and two granddaughters, Olimpia and Ottavia. A Rotary member since 1994 (9 PHF), he has served as a club Secretary and club President; he held the position of district secretary of D-2030 RY 2011-2012.

He is chair of the Rotary Foundation fundraising committee of district 2031, starting from 2013 until today.

He was a member of the board of the Rotary Inter-Country Committees Executive Council in RY 2014-2016 and RY 2024-2026.

He was also services manager and webmaster of ICC Executive Council during RY 2014-2020.

In the RY 2024-2026 period he was responsible for administration and archives of ICC Executive Council.

He is webmaster of ICC Italy, Malta, San Marino.

He has always cultivated social relationships with many people with great enthusiasm throughout his life. As a young man, he practiced many sports, embracing the motto taught to him by his father, a doctor: "Mens sana in corpore sano".

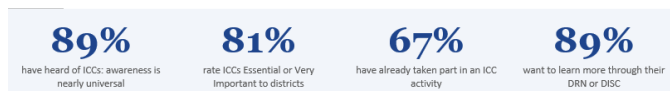
When he retired, he discovered the beauty of amateur cycling, to which he devoted himself with great passion, initially with countless bike rides with friends in the hills of Piedmont and the mountains and passes of the Alps. Later, he also participated in numerous amateur cycling races: the most beautiful, the one that gave him the greatest satisfaction and which he always remembers with great fondness, was the Granfondo Milano-Sanremo, raced at the age of 70 in under 11 hours on the same day, on the very same 290 km course as the "classicissima di primavera" of professional cyclists.



ICC Perception Survey 2026

by Dr Mohamed Yasser—Senior Lead of Digital Innovation and AI Working Group

What 137 Rotarians from 73 districts told us about InterCountry Committees, and what they are asking for next



ABOUT THE SURVEY

In July 2026, the ICC Executive Council invited Rotary leaders worldwide to share how they perceive, understand, and engage with InterCountry Committees. 137 Rotarians from 73 districts responded: district governors, club presidents, ICC national coordinators, and international service chairs from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. The survey included four questions: How well are ICCs known? How well are they understood? How engaged is the Rotary community? And what would help members engage more deeply?

WHAT WE LEARNED

ICCs are known and valued. Almost nine out of ten respondents are aware of ICCs, and about half (49.6%) say they completely understand our purpose, activities, and role within Rotary. The consensus on our value is clear: 81% view ICCs as Essential or Very Important as a network resource for districts, and less than 2% regard it as only slightly important.

Understanding is broad but uneven.

Among aware members, 76% recognize ICCs as bridges of cooperation between districts and clubs in different countries, and 67% associate us with peacebuilding through relationships. However, only half connect ICCs to twin club relationships (50%) or Friendship Exchanges (48%). The tools most aligned with member experience are the ones least connected to our name.

Engagement is real and event-driven.

Two-thirds of aware respondents (67%) have

participated in ICC activities. Meetings and conferences dominate (84% of participants), followed by Global Grants (48%), club twinning (43%), and international service projects (43%). Rotaract and youth-related activity account for only 8.5%, and vocational service just 18%, highlighting clear opportunities for growth.

Word of mouth is our megaphone.

Members learn about ICCs mainly through their district (34%), an ICC representative (23%), or a Rotary event (18%). Only 7% first heard of us via Rotary communications or social media. Our story spreads mostly by word of mouth, while our formal channels remain largely underused.

The appetite for acting is enormous.

Nearly 90% of aware respondents say Yes or Maybe to learning more through their District Resource Network or International Service Committee. When asked what would help, they responded without hesitation: practical examples of successful ICC projects (76%), regular newsletters (53%), more visibility on My Rotary (52%), and clear guidance on how to start or join an ICC (50%). Their interests reflect Rotary's core values: international friendship (73%), service projects (64%), and Global Grant partnerships (62%).

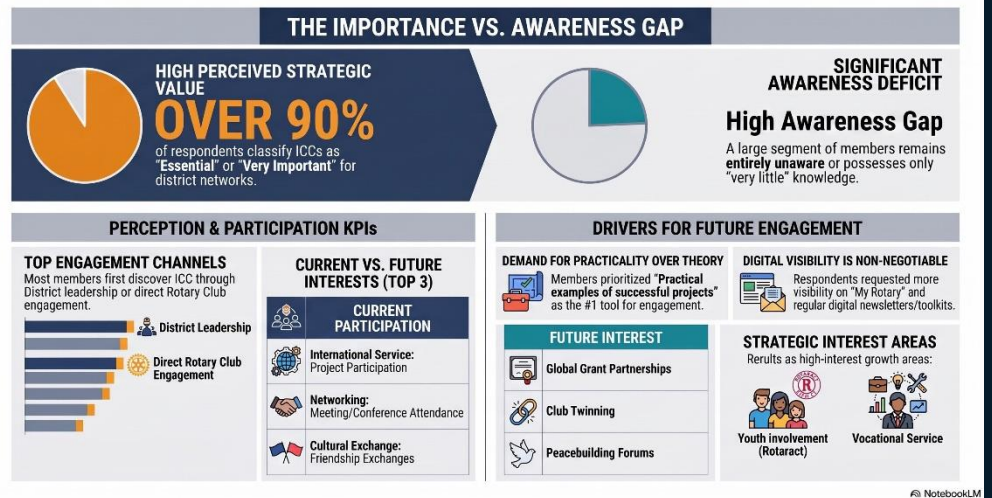
VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Fifty-nine respondents provided suggestions in their own words, and three main asks stand out: more training, webinars, and district sessions; more consistent communication through newsletters and social media; and clearer, simpler information about what ICCs are and how to join one. As one respondent noted, the ICC story should be shared "at all levels: clubs, Rotaractors, social media." Another challenged us to measure and publish the global impact of a movement now in its 76th year.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The message from the field is clear: the Rotary world already recognizes the value of Intercountry Committees. It now needs guidance to engage effectively. For 2026-2028, the data highlights four priorities: showcase real projects instead of just talking about structures; communicate consistently through newsletters and My Rotary; use districts, our strongest channel, to train and equip local leaders; and fully open the doors to Rotaract and vocational service, where interest already exceeds participation. The demand exists. Our task is to meet it.

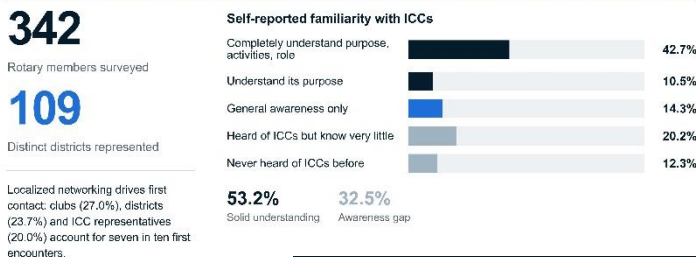
ICC Perception 2026: Bridging the Gap Between Essential Value and Member Awareness



Source: ICC Perception Survey, July 2026 (N = 342 unique respondents; percentages for discovery, understanding, participation, importance, and interest are based on the 122 respondents aware of ICCs; multiple-selection items sum to more than 100%).

RESPONDENT BASE AND AWARENESS

342 members from 109 districts responded; a third of them know little or nothing about ICCs

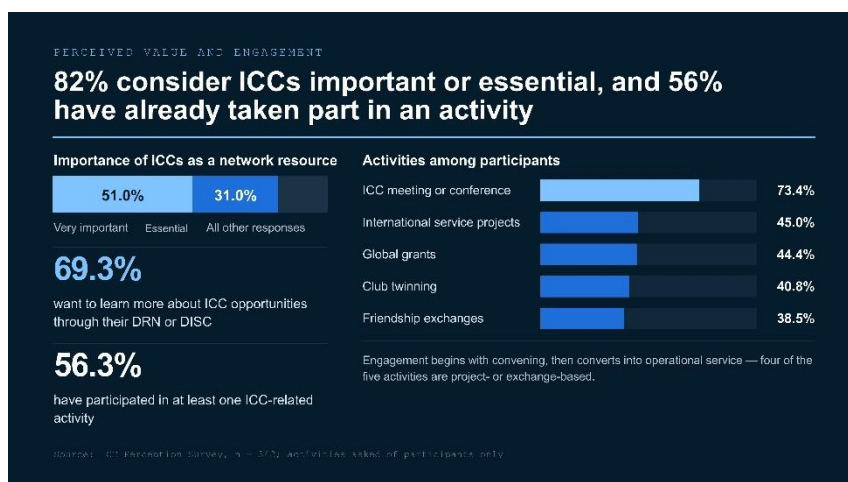


EXPANDED NEEDS AND FUTURE INTERESTS

Members ask first for worked project examples, and are drawn to friendship and service work



Sources: ICC Perception Survey, n = 342



CLICK the link to participate in the survey now
<https://forms.gle/3YLGakz6Dm2TiLjMA>

Update From Strategic Partnerships and Events Working Group

Intercountry Committees are much more than a bridge between Rotary districts — they are a unique platform for creating opportunities, building trust, and developing meaningful international partnerships. Every sponsorship and every collaboration with companies, NGOs, and institutions adds new value, not only to our ICCs but also to the districts we serve and, ultimately, to the entire Rotary family.

As ICC members, we have the privilege and the responsibility to identify, promote, and nurture these partnerships. The organizations we introduce are recognized, reliable, and committed to working with us to increase the impact of Rotary service projects across borders.

Our strength lies in our international network, our local knowledge, and our ability to connect people who share the same desire to serve. Every new partner becomes an additional resource, opening doors to new projects, new expertise, and new opportunities for our districts.

As our president Annemarie says, let us be proud ambassadors of our Intercountry Committees. Let us actively promote our partners, encourage joint initiatives, and demonstrate that ICCs are not only facilitators of friendship between nations, but also catalysts for sustainable action and innovation.

Intercountry Committees are not simply bridges between countries; they are bridges between ideas, resources, and people. The stronger these bridges become, the greater the impact Rotary can achieve throughout the world. Let us continue to strengthen these bridges together, creating new opportunities for service, friendship, and lasting peace.

A-Here are our recent partnerships:

1-Gift of Life Adventure Foundation (GOLA) (www.giftoflifeadventure.com)

They accelerate awareness, advocacy and philanthropy for organ donation in India and globally deeply engage Rotary International to unite for Organ Donation

2-ASF Aviation sans Frontières, Avion-Hôpital—“Access to healthcare by air transport” (<https://asf-fr.org/fr>)

3-Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (AVSF) (AVSF) is a professional and advocacy-based international solidarity association with 48 years of experience. (<https://donner.avsf.org/b/www.avsf.org>)

4-The Rotary Action Group for Girls’ Empowerment (hereafter “**RAG4GE**”) (<https://girlsempowermentrag.org/>) is committed to fostering international leadership, friendship, and service. It is action-oriented where its membership is composed of any community member who has expertise and/or a passion for being active in designing solutions, creating awareness, and executing local and international programs and projects focused on Girls’ Empowerment.

5-ZEBUNET, Association Helping development in poor countries through Microcredit (A Small Loan for a Great leap Forward) (<https://zebu.net/>)

6-The African Tourism Board (hereafter “ATB”) is dedicated to promoting Africa as One Destination through tourism development, destination marketing, strategic partnerships, investment promotion, sustainability, cultural exchange, and economic growth.

B-We have renewed our partnership with:

7RAFFP -Rag for Peace
(<https://www.rotaryactiongroupforpeace.org>)

8My Body Is My Body (MBIMB) -free child safety program using music and songs
(<https://mbimb.org/>)

9IEP -Institute For Economic and Peace (<https://www.economicsandpeace.org/>)

10 -End Plastic Soup
(<https://endplasticsoup.org/fr/>) : Following the remarkable initiatives led by **End Plastic Soup Portugal** and **End Plastic Soup Morocco**, we are delighted to announce the launch of the first **“Week of The Sea Without Plastic”**, which will take place simultaneously across the entire Mediterranean Basin from **2 to 9 November 2026**.

The official launch will be held in **Monaco**, with the agreement and support of **His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco**.

In each of our upcoming newsletters, we will keep you informed about the initiatives, events, and activities planned in connection with this important campaign.

Please find attached the program of the “Week of The Sea Without Plastic”! We are waiting for you in November!

Nada Ghanem
Intercountry Committee /
Strategic Partnerships 2026 -2028



WEEK OF THE SEA WITHOUT PLASTIC (WSWP)

One Week • One Sea • One Future

One Sea • 25 Countries • One Shared Commitment

General Program of the Week

From **2 to 9 November 2026**, Rotary, Rotaract and Interact Clubs from the **25 Mediterranean countries and their river basins** are invited to join forces around a shared objective: **reducing plastic leakage into the sea, raising public awareness, and building a lasting movement to protect human health and preserve marine ecosystems**.

Each day of the Week will focus on a unifying theme, providing the entire Mediterranean with a common identity while allowing every country and community to adapt activities to its own local priorities and realities.

Monday, 2 November - OPENING DAY

One United Mediterranean

Objectives

- Official launch of the WSWP.
- Mobilization of Rotary, Rotaract and Interact Clubs.
- Presentation of partner organizations.
- Commitment of local authorities and institutions.
- Launch of the international communication campaign.

Suggested Activities

END PLASTIC SOUP MONACO

- Opening ceremony.
- Press conferences.
- Signing of commitment charters.
- Broadcast of the international WSWP message.

Tuesday, 3 November - HEALTH DAY

Plastic Concerns Us All

Objectives

- Raise awareness of the impacts of plastics and microplastics on human health.
- Present the latest scientific knowledge.
- Promote the **One Health** approach.

Suggested activities

- Scientific conferences.
- Meetings with researchers and medical experts.
- Exhibitions.
- Documentary screenings.
- Public debates.

Wednesday, 4 November - YOUTH & EDUCATION DAY

Young People Are Building Tomorrow's Mediterranean

Objectives

- Mobilize schools and educational institutions.
- Encourage responsible behaviours.
- Showcase youth initiatives.

Suggested activities

- School presentations.
- Educational workshops.
- Competitions.
- Artistic projects.



Thursday, 5 November - SCIENCE & INNOVATION DAY

Understanding to Act Better

Objectives

- Highlight scientific research.
- Present innovative solutions.
- Strengthen dialogue between scientists and citizens.

Suggested activities

- Laboratory visits.
- Scientific demonstrations.
- Citizen science activities.
- Presentation of innovative technologies.
- Meetings with universities.

Friday, 6 November - BUSINESS & LOCAL AUTHORITIES DAY

Working Together for More Responsible Communities

Objectives

- Mobilize the business community.
- Encourage local public policies.
- Showcase exemplary initiatives.

Suggested activities

- Round-table discussions.
- Corporate sustainability commitments.
- Reduction of single-use plastics.
- Partnership agreements.
- Presentation of local projects.

Saturday, 7 November - MAJOR CITIZEN ACTION DAY

Acting Together for Our Sea

Objectives

- Turn awareness into action.



- Mobilize the largest possible number of volunteers.

Suggested activities

- Beach clean-ups.
- Harbour clean-ups.
- River clean-up operations.
- Urban litter collections.
- Underwater clean-up dives.
- Waste sorting, characterization and weighing.

This day will be the flagship moment of public participation across all twenty-five Mediterranean countries.

- Number of participating clubs.
- Number of volunteers mobilized.
- Number of students reached.
- Number of participating local authorities.
- Number of partner organizations.
- Amount of waste collected.
- Innovative actions implemented.

The closing of the WSWP will highlight the strength of a simultaneous Mediterranean-wide mobilization and demonstrate that, by bringing together citizens, local authorities, scientists, businesses and associations, it is possible to create a lasting impact.

The Five Pillars of the WSWP

EDUCATE

Empower younger generations and promote a culture of prevention.

RAISE AWARENESS

Inform the public about the environmental and health impacts of plastic pollution.

ACT

Multiply concrete actions on the ground.

UNITE

Bring together all stakeholders around a common objective.

SUSTAIN

Transform local initiatives into long-term commitments.

Our Ambition

To make this first edition of the Week of the Sea Without Plastic the largest citizen mobilization ever organized simultaneously across the Mediterranean against plastic pollution.

Sunday, 8 November - CULTURE & MEDITERRANEAN DAY

The Sea Unites Us

Objectives

- Celebrate the Mediterranean as a shared heritage.
- Raise awareness through culture.

Suggested activities

- Concerts.
- Exhibitions.
- Performances.
- Film screenings.
- Artistic creations.
- Literary events.
- Family activities.

Monday, 9 November - RESULTS & COMMITMENTS DAY

Turning One Week into a Lasting Movement

Objectives

- Present the results achieved.
- Thank partners and volunteers.
- Announce the next steps of the initiative.

Each participating territory is invited to report, in particular:

One Week • One Sea • One Shared Future



ICC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2026-28 “LEADING and DEVELOPMENT” -WORKING GROUP

James Onions; Alessandro Leone; Evelina RavarinoKnowlton; Canan Ersoz; Carolyn Khoury; Sridhar Jagannathan; Dr. Mohammed Yasser

L&D for “THE BRIDGE” #2 –August 2026

Rotary aims to deliver lasting change to the world. Ambition alone will not deliver the large, sustainable, international projects our communities need. To achieve impact at scale, Rotary needs strong country-to-country and district-to-district collaboration.

Major projects require more than goodwill. They require trusted partners across borders, local knowledge, cultural understanding, reliable communication, and relationships that can turn ideas into action. This is exactly where ICC has unique value. ICC connects districts, countries and people. It opens doors, builds confidence, strengthens peacebuilding, and gives Rotary the network it needs to move faster and act bigger.

For too long, ICC has been one of Rotary’s best-kept secrets. Its value is real, but too often invisible. Its potential is enormous but still underused. That must change. The Learning and Development Team is bringing together the knowledge that District Governors, DRFCs, DISCs, district teams, ICC Chairs and members need to understand and use ICC effectively. Through videos, presentations and practical documents, these materials and learning opportunities will explain not only what ICC is, but how it can help Rotary deliver stronger projects, build better partnerships and create lasting impact. At the same time, ICC is ensuring these Update From Learning & Development Working Group materials align

with the June 2026 Rotary Code of Policies, strengthening governance while protecting the cultural diversity that makes ICC so powerful.

The call to action is clear: follow the Learning and Development updates in next month’s Bridge, where more will be covered, engage with the material, and bring this knowledge back to your districts and sections.

- Rotary needs ICC.
- ICC needs informed leaders.
- Now is the moment for you to learn, collaborate and act.

Update From ICC Future Vision Working Group

Giuseppe Mosci, Walter Ebner, Alberto Guerra, Nada Ghanem, Andrei Botez, Sridhar Jagannathan, Edgard Cyr Tougouma, Sanela Music Lee, Elise Nassif, Sophia Dudler “THE BRIDGE” #2 –August 2026
July 17th, 2026

A great work has been carried out and current ICC documentation is compliant with R.I. rules (COP) as for June 2026 Amendments.

The Survey to share with the Rotary world has been finalized and it is on its way to go out very shortly. Learning & Development Working Group will assist to analyse results.

The action is to establish a Roadmap starting from this base, enlarge awareness, get to basic Rotary behavioursto maintain members, get new ones, as per the Rotary International Action Plan. The WG Future Vision has defined its own meeting plan.

Communications and Branding Working Group's Purpose is ICC brand, storytelling, visibility, web presence, social media, knowledge hub and transparent impact reporting.

The team consists of the following members

Senior Leads: Güneş Ertas and Shereen Hunter
Core contributors: Vino Sookloll; Pierre-Marie Achart; Dr Mohammed Yasser; Cosmina Zaherescu; Carolyn Khoury, Dr Leon JV Rensburg.

Rotaract allocation: Rotaract Co-Lead: Vatsal Khimasiya.

Supporting Rotaractors: Allan Mukasa; Ezgi Batu.
Our Work Group Integrates the Communications function with explicit brand compliance and brandbuilding responsibilities.

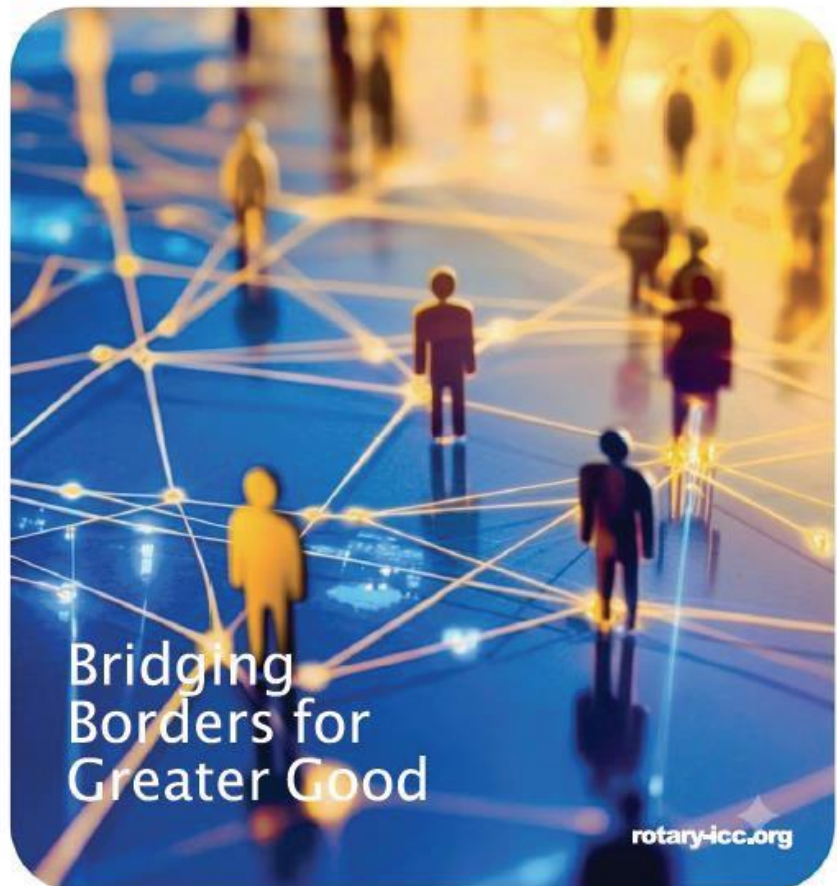
Communications Workgroups has successfully published the latest Issue of The Bridge July Issue.

The Bridge team is waiting for your articles until not later than every months 20th day. So we are waiting for your input in September Issue until 20 August

Uniting Rotarians
Across Borders

Rotary  |  **INTERCOUNTRY
COMMITTEES
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

 **The
BRIDGE** **ICC UPDATE**
1st Edition - July 2026



rotary-icc.org

Congratulations

Our President of the Italy–Malta–San Marino with Equatorial Guinea CIP is the second-largest donor among all Italian Rotary Districts.

We extend our warmest congratulations to Annalisa and wish her continued success, generosity, and dedication in carrying forward this outstanding commitment to service



Donazioni totali				
	Distretto	Ammontare	DG	DRFC
1	2110	\$ 809.213,76	Sergio Malizia	Ferdinando Testoni Blasco
2	2050	\$ 739.099,40	Annalisa Balestreri	Cristina Rodondi
3	2072	\$ 587.696,83	Guido Giuseppe Abbate	Luciano Alfieri

Donazioni totali pro-capite				
	Distretto	Ammontare	DG	DRFC
1	2050	\$ 247,94	Annalisa Balestreri	Cristina Rodondi

51

Rotary 

Association of Rotary Clubs - UAE
جمعية أندية روتاري الإمارات

Congratulations

RTN. YASEEN JAFFER

ARCH KLUMPH SOCIETY - TRUSTEES CIRCLE MEMBER

The Rotary Foundation's Highest
Philanthropic Recognition

Your extraordinary philanthropy and
dedication to Doing Good in the World
inspire Rotarians worldwide and
exemplify the values of service,
leadership, and lasting impact.

*Thank you for your vision and
commitment to building a better future
through Rotary.*



 The 
BRIDGE

ICC at Rotterdam Action Summit

ICC Peace Forum breakout, Rotary European Action Summit 2026, Rotterdam

Tokio Room on the first floor and directly located near all the rooms and facilities on the ground floor

Time: 12:00 – 15:00
Dress: Smart Casual

Saturday, September 12th:

• Part One: Opening Plenary (12:00 – 12:25):

- Host welcomes and vibrant atmosphere.
- Protocol, National key-word display
- Master of Ceremonies outlining the three hour itinerary.
- Keynote speaker/s: showcasing possibilities. (RIP / Director/ s)

• Part Two: Plenary Experiential

- Presentations/Workshop 12:25 – 1pm):
- IEP (Institute for Economics and Peace) unveiling Pillars of Positive Peace.
 - Technology, Peacebuilding and Social Entrepreneurship: Insights.

• Part Three: Breakout Sessions (1:00- 1:30pm):

- The role of the Inter-Generational Dialogue
- Interaction and workshop.

15 min Body Break

• Part Four (1:45-2:15pm):

- Community-based Peacebuilding with regional ICC perspectives.
- Identifying Regional needs regarding peace.
- Debrief and connecting participants to tools/resources.

• Part Five: Closing Plenary (2:15-2:45pm):

- Collective wisdom and peace.
- Signing of MOUs
- Closure
- 2:45 Group Photo (outside Tokio room) and collection of participation certificates



ROTARY EUROPEAN ACTION SUMMIT

The ICC Breakout Session

12th September 2026

World Trade Center, **Rotterdam**

Tokio Room - 12 to 2 PM

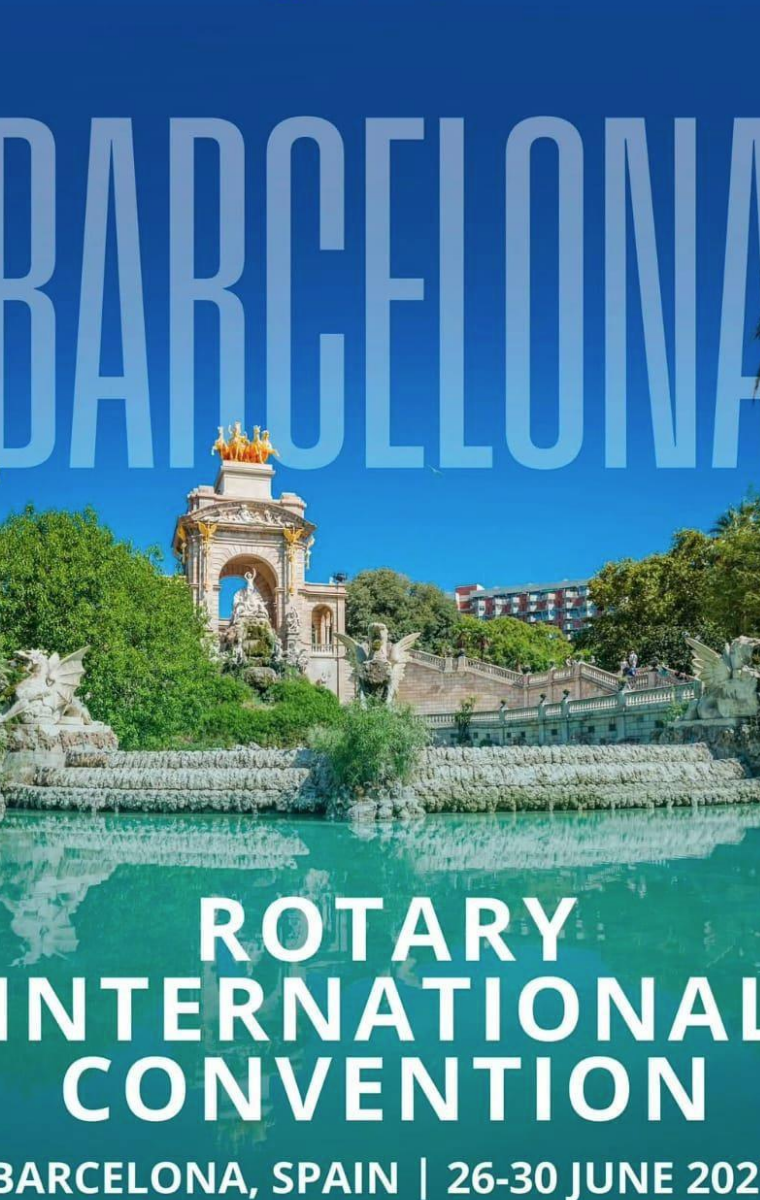
REGISTRATION CLOSES ON 1ST SEPTEMBER

REGISTER NOW



Uniting Rotarians Across Borders

Convention registration will open in September. You can sign up for email updates with important dates, registration information, and special promotional rates. ICC will be present and active during the convention, with a booth, breakout session and Dinner.

The poster features a vibrant blue sky background with a large, semi-transparent 'BARCELONA' text overlay. Below the text, a scenic view of the Fontaine de la Vierge in Barcelona is shown, with its ornate structure and statues reflected in the turquoise water. The Rotary logo and the event title 'Rotary INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION' are prominently displayed in white. The location and dates 'BARCELONA, SPAIN | 26-30 JUNE 2027' are also in white. At the bottom, registration information is provided in white text, including the website 'convention.rotary.org'.

Rotary  |  **BARCELONA**
2027

BARCELONA

**ROTARY
INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION**

BARCELONA, SPAIN | 26-30 JUNE 2027

Registration opens in September 2026.
Visit convention.rotary.org for more information.


**AFRICA
RISING**
Grow to Serve

Rotary
Zone 22 

7th ALL AFRICA
ZONE INSTITUTE
UGANDA 2026

**SPEKE RESORT
MUNYONYO - KAMPALA**
Thursday, October 1 to
Saturday October 3, 2026

**OVER 1000
ALREADY
REGISTERED**

Extended rates from June 1, 2026, to July 31, 2026.

380 US\$	220 US\$
Rotarians Spouses Guests	Rotaractors

Secure your seat NOW.
Register on:
africazoneinstitute.org

**UP TO 31
JULY**

Rotary

European Action Summit



TO BELONG
THE POWER OF
CONNECTION AND ACTION
ROTTERDAM 2026

Thank You

Thank you for reading the second edition of The Bridge – ICC Update.

We sincerely appreciate your interest in the work of the Intercountry Committees (ICC) and your commitment to building friendships, fostering international understanding, and advancing Rotary's vision of service above self.

We hope the stories, achievements, and updates shared in this edition have informed, inspired, and strengthened the bonds that unite Rotarians across borders.

Together, we continue to build bridges of peace, collaboration, and goodwill around the world.

Thank you for being part of our journey. We look forward to sharing the next edition with you.

The Intercountry Committees Executive Council (ICC)

