

Rotary Inter-Country Committees, created to promote peace between peoples

The history of the Inter-Country Committees began in September 1930, at the Regional Rotarian Congress, which was held for the first time in Europe, in The Hague.

French and German Rotarians, who did not know each other, found themselves staying in the same hotel by chance. The moment they discovered that they were all Rotarians, PDG Otto Büler of the Rotary Club of Vienna (District 73, which then included Germany and Austria) improvised a meeting between French and Germans, which took place in the same venue as the Congress, under the presidency of Bernardot, then President of the Rotary Club of Paris. At the end of the meeting, the representatives of the two countries understood how necessary it was to try to overcome the difficult moment they were going through and devised every means to meet more often and to be able to peacefully discuss peace and friendship, as free people, putting aside , all the hatred and political squabbles that then divided the two peoples.

It is in this spirit and with these perspectives that the first timid “InterCountry Committee *France - Germany*” was created with representatives of the two Districts (the French one and the Austro-German one).

This Committee functioned until 1938, when Hitler imposed the dissolution of the German Rotary Clubs.

After the war, contacts between Rotary clubs and districts intensified, first between Germany, France, Austria and Italy and then gradually between those around the world, encouraging the creation of a network of Inter-Country Committees and real twinnings.



The Inter-Country Committees (ICC) today constitute a large international network that implements service projects and works to promote peace among peoples around the world. They are based on relationships between Rotarians from different countries and foster friendship and understanding between Rotarians from all over the world.

One of the Inter-Country Committees that stands out for its activity and liveliness is the ICC Italy, Malta, San Marino, Switzerland, Liechtenstein which recently organized an ICC meeting from 21 to 24 September 2023 in Gardone Riviera, in the Hotel Savoy Palace and Hotel Villa Sofia, set in the splendid setting of Lake Garda.

The meeting was organized by the Rotary clubs of the Cidneo Group together with the District Governor 2023-2024 Luigi Maione, assisted by the assistant to the Governor Francesco Rotondo and the District Rotaract Representative Francesco Di Martino.

A very current theme of the ICC was the conference "SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY", which took place on the morning of Saturday 23 September in the plenary room of the Hotel Savoy Palace, with speakers of international standing.

The conference began with greetings from the Vice President of the Rotary Club Salò Desenzano del Garda Gianluca Peretti, the President of the Rotary Club Valtenesi Marco Plati, Luigi Maione Governor 2023-2024 District 2050, Francesco Di Martino RD Rotaract 2023-2024 District 2050, Paolo Colombo Chair of ICC Switzerland-Italy, Carlo Silva Chair of ICC Italy-Switzerland, Giorgio Maione Councilor for the Environment of the Lombardy Region who brought greetings from the President of the Lombardy Region Attilio Fontana. Present were: Luigi Attanasio, Secretary of ICC Italy-CH, Beat am Rhyn, Secretary of ICC CH-Italy, Anne Marie Bianchi, Delegate of ICC Malta.

After greetings from the authorities present, the moderator of the conference Giulio Tosini, Editor-in-Chief of the Giornale di Brescia, after a timely address on the theme of the conference, gave the floor to the first speaker, Eng. Giovanni Leonardi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Elettrica Ticinese company who, with a masterful exposition, focused on "Safe and sustainable energy from a Swiss perspective", placing an emphasis on the interconnections of the accumulable energies of European countries.



Followed by Eng. Marco Enrico Ricotti, Full Professor of Nuclear Plants at the Polytechnic University of Milan, who spoke about "nuclear power and the energy trilemma", focusing on the current state of nuclear power plants in Europe with related dangers, costs and advantages.

Last speaker Francesco Bettoni, Founder of A/35, who spoke about "Projects for decarbonisation". Concluded Massimo Sartori, Regional Councilor of Lombardy for energy resources and relations with the Swiss Confederation, who opened a lively and crowded debate on the topics covered.



As usual, a cultural and gastronomic program was organized around the theme of the meeting which involved the numerous participants in the visit of the Botanical Garden of Gardone Riviera, in the excursion to the Isola del Garda with a guided tour in foreign languages and in the very welcome visit to the Consorzio Cantine del Garda at Villa Galnica in Puegnano del Garda with wine tastings and aperitif reinforced with chef Bresciani's menu.

On Saturday afternoon, the exceptional cultural visit to the Vittoriale and its park, with a foreign language guide, is a must. An elegant dinner at the "Cascina San Zago" in Salò concluded the meeting.

At the Committee meeting held on Sunday morning, the members agreed to meet for the 2024 meeting, in Zurich, Switzerland, from 26 to 29 September.

