



Dear Union and Single Club Presidents,

The elimination of violence against women is key to the full realization of women's basic rights. Yet, on average in the world, one out of three women has been a victim of physical or sexual violence, often inflicted by an intimate partner. Feelings of guilt and shame and the inadequacy of judicial systems prevent women from speaking up about these crimes, which remain for the most part unreported.

In the face of this silent pandemic, Soroptimists need to Stand Up for Women! As a global voice for women, our responsibility is to give visibility to this public health issue and to urge politics and institutions to take immediate action. We want to see a change. More emphasis has to be put by public policies on prevention of gender-based violence. Structures and institutions need to be better equipped to treat victims' physical and mental health. Women should feel safe speaking out and denouncing those who violated their rights.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, is the occasion for us to raise awareness, rally individuals and demand from authorities that they commit to this important cause. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence is an international campaign that runs from the 25<sup>th</sup> of November to the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, Human Rights Day. Its rallying emblem is the orange colour, symbolizing a brighter future without violence.

I encourage you to support the UN Secretary's General call to "Orange the world". During the 16 Days, your Club or Union may plan awareness-raising events or "oranging activities". For example, oranging your website, social media, your clubs, and even city buildings and landmarks! I trust Soroptimist Clubs and Unions to demonstrate once again their creativity and passion for women's rights on this special occasion.

I am counting on each and every Soroptimist to raise awareness also on the web. Look out for the Federation's website, facebook and twitter accounts where we will be posting regular updates. You may address the Federation and the Campaign directly through the #StandUpForWomen and #16Days hashtags.

The Programme & Advocacy team hopes to put your actions at the heart of the Federation campaign. What projects have you been working on to address the issue of violence against women? Write us at [programme@soroptimisteurope.org](mailto:programme@soroptimisteurope.org) before November 7th, and your work may be showcased on the Federation's website and social media.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, Soroptimists Stand Up for Women!

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SIE President