



Dear ladies of Agora,

A new Agora Year has started with a new board and a new theme of the year:

“Live creatively, fully and passionately”.

This newsletter is dedicated to the 19th Conference which was held in Brasov from the 8th -11th October having the motto Fun and Mystery in Romania.

For those of you who have missed the fabulous conference you will find in this newsletter among other things the speech of our new president and the introduction of the board members for the social year 2015-2016.

So many pictures have been taken – some of them we put in between the articles – but if you want to get more of the atmosphere of this conference you need to have a look at our website www.agoraclubinternational.com – with further links - or our facebook site and have also a look on our presentation of our **First ACI Service Project** “Eyes for the world” at the end of the newsletter.

Now first of all let us start with the thank you message of our new president Ly thi Thanh Thao.

Brigitte ACI Secretary 2015-2017

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My dear friends,

I feel it's a must to begin this first newsletter of the social year 2015-2016 with a thank you message.

I thank all of you for the precious friendship and the enthusiastic participation in the 19th ACI Conference.

In particular I keep saying thank you to my friends of Agora Club Romania for their extraordinary job. The Conference is the explosion of fulfilling friendship, of consistent effort to make the highest difference, of the capacity to share the vision for a brilliant future of Agora Club.

I also thank my Romanian ladies for their sweetest gift: click here to enjoy the [song](#)

I should say that the 19th ACI Conference in Brasov was really fabulous! Its beauty and poetry can be captured only by one's senses. At our arrival, on seeing the large stripe of the 19th ACI Conference, I felt



that all the fatigue of the trip disappeared. I knew it was time to rock! At the registration desk at Hotel Alpin, we were warmly welcomed by hard working but always smiling Romanian ladies.



I particularly love the handmade gingko biloba leaves.



The **pre tour** took us to Bran Castle. What a pleasure it was to get to know the history, the myth, and the enchantment of this place! We also knew some mysteries regarding Count Dracula, Queen Marie, and Princess Ileana.



After that tour, we were full of energy and enthusiasm, and were ready to face the challenges of the **Councilors' Meeting**. It was really beautiful! We discussed all issues with utmost serenity and positivity.



After work, we had great fun at the **Welcome Party**. I can still see the rich colors of all the German and Romanian traditional dresses and can still hear the echo of the traditional Romanian music and dance. The jovial atmosphere was so inspiring that I spontaneously began to dance, which was not usual at all. 😊



Then on Saturday morning, we had the **AGM**. We embraced all changes for the wellbeing of Agora Club; we had hard moments to say good bye to Sandy and Karin; we showed confidence and support for the new ACI Board; we wholeheartedly welcomed the first Service Project of ACI, "Eyes For The World".



Christine Wernitznig applied for
Charter of Agora Club Austria



Gorgeous and vibrant ladies of Agora Club
Italy performed an amusing show for the
2016 Conference in Milano.

Ursula Lejeune, ACI Vice President 2015-2016
and Brigitte Colberg, ACI Secretary 2015-2016.
Bravissime!



Our two tellers, Corry Zimmer and
Geneviève Longère, have contributed to
the success of the Conference. Thank
you.

Agora Club Belgium showed recognition for
Karin's excellent job on the ACI Board 2013-2015.



The presentation of the presidential
motto and logo 2015-2016
"HAND HEAD HEART".

I should say that the AGM has obtained great accomplishment and satisfaction.

Just some photos to share with you the magical **Gala Dinner**



Huge thanks to all the Committees of Agora Club Romania. They have made this Conference a memorable event in the history of Agora Club.

Kelly's wonderful team 2014 – 2015.
Thank you



Friendship is the wellspring of fun.

The beauty of the “Side by Side” initiative.
Thank you, Ruth Hungwe, LCI President 2015-2016.



Evviva le
mie amiche Italiane! Vi voglio
bene!

The ACI Board 2015-2016 with big
smiles.





Sergio's unexpected arrival overwhelmed me with joy and happiness.

This special cake added deliciousness to the Gala Dinner!



We didn't want to leave Romania! The **post tour** led us to Viscri with its impressive fortified churches and to Sighisoara, the most beautiful and well preserved inhabited citadel in Europe.



I will forever cherish the splendid moments of this Conference. Brasov, and above all, the ladies of Agora Club Romania, will forever be in my heart.

Thank you.
Ly thi Thanh Thao
ACI President 2015-2016

Our National Board

ACI President Ly thi Thanh Thao



My dear Agora friends,

I feel so blessed, so happy, so privileged to be your companion in this extraordinary adventure.

During my beautiful circling life, I have always kept in mind a saying from Saint Francis of Assisi: “He who works with his hands is a labourer. He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands, his head, and his heart is an artist.”

An artist uses his hands to create artworks that take source from the ideas he nurtures in his head. His head is overwhelmed with ideas and concepts to solve the existential problems in an aesthetic way.

But it’s his heart that makes his artwork timeless and unique; it’s his heart that transforms his artwork into something that reaches a universal dimension that conveys messages of eternal beauty.

At this point, I recall a beautiful sentence in *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: “... it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye”.

Reflecting on the history of Agora Club over these twenty years, I am, more than ever, convinced that my Agora friends are artists. And together we’ve been creating an immense painting.

Our painting is made up of hands extending to build a world of friends.

Our painting is made up of smiles, of sparks of joy from children of the dump in Cambodia. By helping these children, I think we can help restore the hope to bring back the splendor to their country, a country that was able to build such magnificent temples as Angkor Wat.

Our painting is made up of laughter and enchantment from children of “Eyes For The World”. I have just been to the most beautiful traditional fireworks in Monza Park. At that moment, I was thinking of them. They, too, one day, with better eyesight, can enjoy this spectacle and rejoice at the beauties surrounding them.

Our painting is made up of colors, of warmth, of happiness from the little creatures who put on the beautiful knit wears from our knitting project. They feel so loved and so cared for.

Our painting is made up of exhilaration from children in Nepal who can still nurture hopes for a positive future after the devastating earthquake.

So whenever I look at our rising barometer, I associate it to beautiful brushstrokes that act as a magic wand to transform our painting into a source of love and light, into a source of harmony and beauty.

The immense painting of Agora Club International, indeed, brings joy to the world and generates beautiful emotions.

My dear Agora friends,

Let's amplify love and foster friendship with Ladies' Circle International, Tangent Club International, Round Table International, and 41 International!

Let's make the highest difference!

And most importantly, let's involve "Hand Head Heart" in our so-called "artistic creation"!

Yours in friendship and love

Ly thi Thanh Thao



ACI President 2015-2016

ACI Vice President Ursula Lejeune



Dear Ladies,
with Brigitte, I am one of the two brand new board members. After an interesting week spent in Brasov and a wonderful conference, we started with a fruitful board meeting. We are all busily working for our organization now and personally I am very excited, enthusiastic and proud to be part of this team with these lovely, outstanding ladies Thanh Thao, Kelly, Martine and Brigitte. I am looking forward to sharing this year with all of you in friendship, togetherness, compassion, love and understanding with hand, head and heart

Lots of love Ursula

ACI Immediate Past President Kelly Geisler



Dear Ladies and Dear Friends,

I am so honored to be a part of this beautiful sisterhood of Agora and a team member on the ACI board for another year. I have met and enjoyed many of you over the past years and this has been such an incredible blessing to me in every way. I look forward to this year, and know that I will cherish forever all of the beautiful memories that we are sure to make.

All of you have shown how thoughtful and kind you are with your actions of well thought out ideas of the head, which you have turned into labors of love with your hands and your hearts.

As we set out on a new year together, I wish you much success in all you do. As Thanh Thao has said, your heart is what transforms your creations of head and hand in to eternal beauty. May you continue to be creative as you help to add a bit of you to this beautiful masterpiece of art, the world is your canvas and it is a better and more beautiful place because of all of you!

Wishing you all the best

Lots of Love

Kelly

ACI Secretary Brigitte Colberg



Dear Ladies,

I am Brigitte from AC Tangent Germany. I live in Hamburg which is far in the north of Germany. I started circling in 1999 and was foundation member of Tangent Club Hamburg. Since that time I was busy on the national board and national president for two years.

I am proud to be part of the international board and embarrassed what is going to happen the next two years.

Love, Yours in continued friendship

Brigitte

ACI Treasure Martine Monzo



Dear Friends

This is my second year as Treasurer and it's a privilege to serve this organisation.

This past year was extremely rich, and I had a wonderful time with my friends on the Board. We shared a lot of laughs and joy. A very special thanks to Sandy and Karin, outgoing members, for their help and cheerfulness.

And now welcome to Ursula and Brigitte!

The 19th conference in Brasov has been extremely fruitful; it was a great pleasure to meet vibrant ladies and to share ideas.

I am enthusiastic to be at your service for another year, working with Kelly, Thanh Thao, Ursula and Brigitte...

...and with my head, my heart and my hands

Love

Martine

For the first time at an ACI Conference

Austria

Agora Austria – our new member

It was very nice, it made us very happy! (Quote of the Austrian emperor Franz Josef I.)

Our first trip to an international Agora Club Conference started with a very warm welcome of our host Mihaela Cracana. She was waiting for us till half past two at night with some Moldavian wine and lots of Rumanian delights. Her sense of humour and her smile were infectious.

During the last month we had lots of Email- and Facebook-contacts with the Agora board, now we met the lovely ladies in the beautiful surroundings of castle Bran. Special thanks go to Karin Chaffart, who always had an open ear and supported us in these times.

We will remember the Welcome evening and the Gala night in Brasov, but the ACI Conference was our highlight. At least we could present our logo and our aims and objectives – a very special and emotional moment in our young Agora life ☺ Hurray, Austria was adopted unanimously!

We would like to thank the ACI board 2014/15 with all our heart and looking forward to a powerful future with Thanh Thao and her team. Thank you for your very warm welcome!

For sure we are looking forward to seeing you all at our Charter in Austria from 3.-6. June 2016!!!

Yours in friendship Christine and Gabi



Voting for the aims and objections of AC Austria

Imke from AC Tangent Germany

Planned, booked, payed, checked in and ready to go. Hamburg – Frankfurt – Bucharest – Poiana Brasov. The network is up and running; in Frankfurt we had already met other ladies who were also on their way to the ACI conference. We got along well straight away which gave us the feeling that we would have a really nice time.

As we arrived in Bucharest we met some international participants and I was not surprised when I saw their happy and welcoming faces which imparted a feeling of companionship and community. Those situations were the ones I hoped for because up until the end it wasn't even clear if I was going to go.



I could talk about the beautiful landscape, the amazing hotel or about the perfect planning by the romaine ladies but I really want to talk about what it is like to be with roundabout 150 ladies from all over the world. For me this was the first journey and meeting with the TCD but from the first minute on I felt like

I have always been a part of AGORA.



Whether we are talking about the country specific evening with all the traditional costumes from all over the world on Friday



or the gala evening



with the perfect and classy ambience on Saturday, every day had its very own special moments and left a really nice impression. But I have to say I enjoyed the AGM meeting the most. It was very well structured and with the help of the preparations from the councillors meeting the delegates and visitors were guided through the meeting. And even here, in a place where everything is about paragraphs, ideas and votes, you never felt like you are missing the warmth and the joy of all the ladies who came from far away to be present and contribute to the meeting with respect and the feeling of friendship.

I want to thank every single one of you – for the experience that will be carried in my heart.

I want to say thank you to every single lady – whether from the USA, Norway, England, Morocco or any other participating country. You gave me a lot! Be the light was Kelly's motto. Hand Head Heart is Thanh Thao's new motto. I am a part of Agora – with Hand Head and Heart ...

Imke Greve, TC 55 Schleswig, TCD Editorin, Germany

Words of the conference team

MY DEAR AGORA FRIENDS,

I want not just to thank you all, LADIES, for coming to Romania, for being so nice and kind during the 19-th ACI Conference in Brasov and to apologize for all the details which did not reach your expectations, but mainly to show you the unknown face of our organising effort, the involvement, the worries and the hard, but finally pleasant, work in a real TEAM consisting of 12 friends from both AGORA 2 and AGORA 3 clubs from Brasov:

ADINA, ANGELA, BETTY, CORINA, DOMNITA, ELENA, GABI, MIHAELA, RODICA, SILVIA, SIMONA and SORINA.

Our first question was, of course: WILL THEY AGREE TO COME TO ROMANIA? Most people don't know much about our country and some, unfortunately, know only bad things, so we had a lot of worries related to the presence of representatives

from all Agora countries. And the answer came with the best help and support that we could ever imagine from ACI. All the ladies of the International Board promoted the Conference and were such great supporters of Romania for this event! We all thank you so much, ladies!

Soon after we've sent the Registration Form and confirmations started to come appeared the second question: HOW TO TURN THIS CONFERENCE INTO A SUCCESS?

Of course we didn't want anybody to come to Romania and feel like going down on the stairways to hell. So we started the work. And the start was not easy at all, we belonged to two clubs, every problem had two solutions, the ideas were always different, but this is how the world evolves. Step by step, discussing every detail often in our clubs and then again in our team of 12, we finally managed to set up, brick by brick, the whole architecture of the conference. And putting together all the ideas and examining all the disagreements, we finally reached to the best choices. But the most important achievement at this moment was that we learned how to like working together, and how to simply ignore some of our own ideas for the sake of the Conference. And even if the beginning was quite hard, from this point on we started acting like a real team and things began to move in the right direction. The general feeling which arose stronger and stronger every day was: YES, WE CAN! Yes, we want and we can organise something memorable! We all are kind and hospitable, and together we will counterpoise all the infrastructural deficiencies of our country with the beautiful landscapes and the best tourism services it can offer, alongside our work, our smiles and our love!

I don't want to write more about the event itself, you know all about it. In my opinion it looked like a flash light: bright and short. FUN AND MYSTERY - Registration, Traditional Evening, AGM and GALA DINNER.

At the end there came the third question and maybe the most important one: WAS THE CONFERENCE IN ROMANIA A REAL SUCCESS? And the answer was brought by happy faces, many photos, FUN and FUN again, by lots of congratulations and a wonderful feed-back which echoed long after the event was over. And also with a better image for our country. I've so often heard: I didn't know that Romania is so occidental and such a beautiful country! Yes, I consider it was a success!

It was a success because we all are AGORA. Because we all are members of such a wonderful organization, built on generosity and sense of tolerance, on dedication and will of offering our work and our time for the benefit of all around us.

It was a success thanks to an amazing ACI Board who made things look easier and suggesting every time the best solutions. And last, but not least, thanks to the

AGORA LADIES, these wonderful ladies, our friends from all over the world who keep our AGORA alive.

It was a great honour for our TEAM organizing the 19th AGORA CLUB INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE here in Romania, and it is a great joy now, when we receive your positive feed-backs. THANK YOU, THANK YOU SO MUCH LADIES!

Sorina Barbu
National President 2015 – 2016
AGORA ROMANIA.

Kelly's impressions of Romania

ACI 19th ACI Conference held in Brasov, Romania

I have taken a bit of all of you home with me from this spectacular conference – from the lovely moments we all shared during the various tours and events held, to the precious and thoughtful gifts that returned home with me in the extra suitcase I had to purchase.... I am overwhelmed and overjoyed by the love and kindness shared throughout this unforgettable time. The ladies of Agora Club Romania really made us all feel so welcomed and cared for in their homeland, which soon came to feel as if I had returned home to childhood stomping grounds. I will never tire of reminiscing and reliving these very special moments nor of thanking the conference committee and all who made this the successful event that it was.

I was able to share in more private and personal moments on an extended stay following the conference, which only endeared this country to my heart even more. I have eaten the most succulent fruits and vegetables fresh from the rich and nourishing soil, drank fresh milk and eaten cheeses from home reared cows smelled the freshness in the clean crisp morning air, viewed colorful and ever changing breathtaking landscapes from on high and below.



Visited quaint villages with unpaved roads leading to small chapels of a time before, to bustling lit up cities with people and cars in never ending movement to a constant hum of the heart and rhythm of the city.





I have seen the humble homes and the contrasting opulence of the previous regime and remnants left behind,



I have viewed freestanding artwork from famous sculptor Constantin Brâncuși and touched the cold stones with my very hands



and adored the bright and cheerful local pottery of Horezu,



And seen the phenomena of the living stones.





I have wandered through gorgeous gardens of monasteries and taken in their peaceful and spiritually filled tranquil surroundings, knowing that behind the walls unseen to many, are busy hands and minds creating, thinking and



praying for all of mankind ... all of this leaving me content yet willing and wanting to return for more.

The people of this land have all been so kind and welcoming, ready to share in their love of their homeland, history, traditions and their families and their homes. Thank you to all who have opened their hearts and homes on this grand and most wonderful adventure.

From the start our lovely Agora Club Romania Conference Team and all of their members have persevered through challenges to ensure a successful conference was held and enjoyed by all, and by their side the Ladies Circlers, Round Tablers and 41ers of Romania have continued their unwavering support of their sister club. To all of those that worked for their Agora National and local clubs, LCI and LC clubs throughout the year, travelled to join in the ACI Worldwide International Conferencemy lovely Angels of the Agora Club International Board of 2014-15 and the team of the 2015-16 ACI Board – thank you for your part in making this a most memorable time for all ... my heart is overflowing with all the unbelievable love and kindness that has been shared and the memories made that will carry us all through to our next meeting!

Keep up the good work my friends ... Keep Being the Light ...with your Hearts, your Head, and your Hands - until I see you again

Lots of Love

Forever Young & Forever Friends –

Kelly

Xxoo

Save the date 7-9 October 2016 Milano!
ACI Conference & Celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of ACI

GREAT NEWS !

We are very proud to present our very first

Agora Club International Service Project

EYES FOR THE WORLD (EFTW)



Making a difference in children's education,
in their self confidence
...in their life!



Your ISP Convenors are here to help :
Veerle De Jonge : veerle_de_jonge@yahoo.com
Sandy Van Niekerk : svn@meab.co.za
www.agoraclubinternational.com



**WHAT IS EYES
FOR THE
WORLD?**



EFTW is a non-profit organisation. It provides self-adjustable spectacles which allow users to alter the power of the lenses in order to correct their own eyesight.

WHO IS IT FOR?



For children in less-privileged areas who are deprived of essential eyecare.

**HOW CAN YOUR
AGORA CLUB
OR COUNTRY
HELP?**



- By bringing the project to your country and providing less-privileged children with EFTW spectacles.
- By financially helping the project.
- By working in Club/Club or Country/Country related projects.

**YOUR ACI ISP CONVENORS
ARE HERE TO HELP**



Sandy Van Niekerk (svn@mweb.co.za) and
Veerle De Jonge (veerle_de_jonge@yahoo.com)
are here to help you every step along the way!

GETTING STARTED

- If you feel children in your country could benefit from the EFTW spectacles, let us know. We'll help you get started
- **AC Morocco** and **AC Botswana** have already informed us that they are interested to bring EFTW to their countries, in school-based projects.
- Your Agora Club or Country can help them by raising money with activities, fundraising etc. Let the ISP Convenors know about your plans ☺
- All financial contributions can be transferred to the ACI account
- Have a look at the ACI website www.agoraclubinternational.com, where you can download a lovely presentation to show in your Clubs, the application form, the scenario, pictures etc.



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Please mention your Agora Club or Country name and **"ACI ISP"**

Let us make this very first ACI ISP a succes!