

## SIE Club Vaduz

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vaduz Symposium “Fragile Europe”

#### University of Liechtenstein

#### AT THE ZENITH OF TIME

Already in spring Monika Studer directed her thoughts to the topic of a fragile Europe. She and all of us didn't know that a few months later the question of Europe's stability would well be beaten by its own explosiveness.

Until now the “Rheintal Meeting” has taken place every two years. In 2015 it was held in the form of a symposium, which was tantamount to a stroke of genius, because being in line with the spirit and zenith of time this exceptionally is rarely achieved in such a successful way. To that effect, the 1<sup>st</sup> Vaduz Symposium at the University of Liechtenstein titled “Fragile Europe” was held on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> September. 53 women of different SI Clubs (Bad Ragaz, Chur, Dornbirn, Goldes, Graz Rubin, Kreuzlingen, Liechtenstein, Luzern, Rapperswil, Vaduz, Wien Donau and Zug), as well as private persons were interested. In her opening speech as well as in her words of thanks Monika Studer emphasised the team spirit of the SIE Club Vaduz members and complimented her club sisters on their wonderful commitment to this business. Renata Trottmann, SIE President elect 2015-2017, warmly thanked the SIE Club Vaduz for its initiative and commitment facilitating the symposium. SIE Club Vaduz member Elisabeth Wintrich-Geiter supported the symposium with her qualified moderation.

In the symposium invitation read, “It is time to leave the path of cosiness. Let's start to listen to the lamentation of the world as well as to the inner exclamation of mankind, and especially to pay strong attention. 70 years of peace let us allegedly rest safely, but the fortress of Europe is severely shaken. ISIS looks from Libya to Rome with threatening gestures. Former Russian liberators wish for a return to former “Great Russia” and men are drowning daily in the Mediterranean Sea, because of the hope for a better future in Europe they are risking everything”.

Four speakers gave their opinions on these topics. **Edit Schlaffer**, peace-awardee of Soroptimist International Europe, Austrian social scientist and feminist ([www.frauen-ohne-grenzen.org](http://www.frauen-ohne-grenzen.org)), talked about “Mothers in first line of defence against radicalism and recruitment” at the beginning. Since 9/11 the world has been in disorder, and terror again constitutes an extensive worldwide threat. ISIS doesn't obey rules. Watchfulness and a good relationship with their children confines mothers to an important role in preventing radicalism and recruitment, explained Schlaffer. **Vivien Gertsch**, jurist, Past President of SIE Club Vaduz and Vice President of Amnesty International Liechtenstein, informed about “European values – values in Europe” and spanned a historical value-range from the early days until today. With the lecture “Putin's new policy of expansion” **Susanne Scholl**, journalist, author and doyenne of ORF's foreign correspondents ([www.susannescholl.at](http://www.susannescholl.at)), examined the “non”-development of serfs in the Russian agricultural economy, because the dependence of farmers in sovkhozes and kolkhozes is the same as in the time of the tsars. She also talked about absent fathers, about a nation, which needs a strong man to lead it, and about the conquest of the Crimea and the war in Ukraine. **Necla Kelek**, social scientist and economist, amongst others permanent member of “German Islamic Conference” finished the symposium with “Hurriya is called freedom – Arab Spring and its consequences for women”, and spoke about her journeys to Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Turkey. Did we know that 90% of Egyptian women are circumcised, that Tunisia succeeded to rid its law from Sharia and that Tunisia is the most progressive country among all these countries there? “The ghost came out of the bottle”, Kelek said. Women there will never stop to fight for more rights and freedom.

The four different topics with hidden but undeniable indications to a (possible) new world order cannot be digested immediately. The symposium lasted for four hours, required the listeners' full attention and offered challenges to reflect on and react to at the same time. A big reverberation sounds from Liechtenstein into Europe: “To call attention, to act, to help”.

A symposium held by SIE Club Vaduz with equally explosive topics will be planned annually in the future with the aim to establish it as an institution along the “Rheintal Meeting” and “German Friendship Meeting”. We are already looking forward to the second edition next year.

A DVD on the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium “Fragile Europe” can be ordered via the SIE Club Vaduz website [www.soroptimist-vaduz.li](http://www.soroptimist-vaduz.li)

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