

Demography : Quo vadis, Lions in Europe? * (Podiumsdiskussion)

11. October, 09:00 – 10:30

Convention Hall

PID Roberto Fresia, MD 108

Vize Vorsitz: PID Guorúm Bjort Yngvadóttir, MD 109

Speaker List

Lions:

- PID Kalle Elster, D 120
- PDG Christiane Lafeld, MD 111
- PDF Katarzyne Gebert, D 121
- PDG Andreja Stojkovski, D 132
- LePID Kalle Elster, D 120

Leo:

- ILO MD 106, Andreas Vejlsttrup
- ILO MD 108, Emilia Fresia

Key Messages

Since 2007 Lions in Europa have been facing a dramatic reduction in membership due to demographic changes, aging of society, and unattractiveness to new potential members among the younger generation. By 2060 every third European will be older than 64.

In fact, these age and social demographics are also reflected in Lions structure. The average age of an European Lion is 57+ and getting older. While the younger Lions Districts in Eastern and Northern Europe have a higher percentage of women and younger adults, Western Europe are still trapped in older traditional ways, which hinder the inclusion of woman and youth.

Lions must take immediate action to search for new members.

The Forum have determined that 4 major groups in society, which should be actively targeted for new membership in Lions:

- Women
- LEOs
- Young Talents & Service-Oriented Adults
- and the Active Agers (55+).

The following reasons for less "Lionism" have been identified by the Forum, which must be changed in the mind-set and structures at the Lions clubs at country, district and local level.

- Rigid rules, formal structures ,and high costs make many clubs "unattractive and unaccessible" for young talents and LEOs
- Especially Western European clubs still practice "old-fashioned" membership selection, resulting in all elderly male or male-denominated structures, ignoring the potential benefits of adding women and young talents to the clubs.
- Costly initiation and annual fees at local clubs deter younger potentials from joining.

To improve new membership in the new future, the FORUM and participants presented the following ideas and solutions, which should be implemented at all levels of the Lions organizations.

- Less Formality, Structure and Procedure in existing clubs
- Actively targeting LEOs (as the natural addition) with more open-minded and less formal selection.
- More Professional PR for a membership drive and more publicity, esp. in Eastern Europe, also with the support of Western European clubs and districts
- Decreasing the social barriers, to open doors to more women, to also pursue leadership positions.
- Lowering the financial hurdles for "transferring" Leos and new Young Talents
- Modernize the clubs activities to reflect the interests of todays society and the younger generation
- Embrace the use of more social media and interaction to attract young talents
- In an attempt to rejuvenate clubs though, the high potential of "Active Agers (55+), should not be ignored, as these agers have a high level of social capabilities, experience and motivation to serve their community

All Lions clubs and districts are asked to go home and take the initiative for a new membership drive. If Lions Europe does not have an action plan for new members for the centennial year, the Lions risks the disappearance as a major service organization in the next century.