



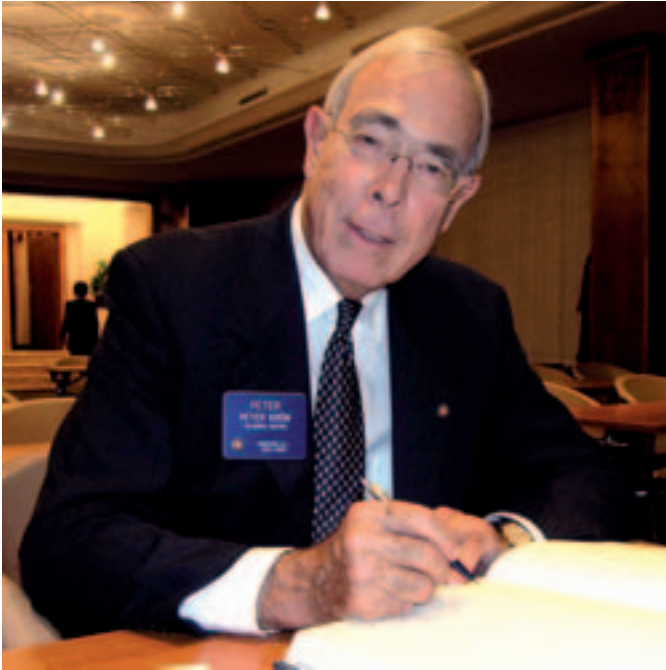
ROTARY WITHOUT BORDERS



D-1910 D-1920 D-2240

Tradition of Rotary Relations among
Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia.





Peter Krön

PRID (Director RI in 2001-2003)
Moderator of the International Assembly 2005
Chairman of Organizing Committee,
RI President's Conference – Vienna 2008,
Member of RC Salzburg (D-1920)

I was delighted to hear that the ICC for cooperation among Rotary Clubs in Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia is working on a brief historical outline of the period when Rotary International was restoring its strong pre-World War II tradition in the former Soviet Bloc countries. For a decade, the Rotarians of Austria in general and District 1920 in particular assisted the restoration of establishment of clubs in today's Czech Republic and Slovakia, and our friends from District 1910 pursued the same goal in the East and South European countries.

It is indeed impossible to be brief about all the time, resources and patience manifested by all those concerned, and the obstacles they had to overcome. However, this survey captures all the key moments of the process that led, in 1999, to establishing Rotary's new District 2240 and laid foundations to its growth. I am convinced this inconspicuous little brochure will be a mighty inspiration for new friendly relations and joint activities.

A Salut to all my Rotary Friends in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia and a great Thank You to all who have contributed to this success story documented in this brochure. Rotary International is truly enriched by Rotary in District 2240.



**Published on the occasion of RI President Dong Kurn Lee's conference
Tribute to 20 Years of Rotary Growth in Central and Eastern Europe
held on December 6 to 8, 2008 in Vienna (Austria, EU)**



Jozefa Poláková
District Governor for
2008/2009
Rotary District 2240
Member of RC Košice

I am not exactly a veteran; I became a Rotarian in 2001 when my RC Košice was chartered by RI. I am not in a position to comment on the developments in the 1990s when our Rotary Clubs were being established or restored. However, I can personally recall the successful start of our District 2240, assisted by our Austrian friends a decade ago. We have matured since then as Rotarians, embracing the Rotary life principles as a second nature. Membership has nearly doubled in our District, most clubs have women on their lists, and Rotary membership has ceased to be single-generation affair.

In addition to our own humanitarian projects and participation in most of the Rotary Foundation programs we pay extra attention to young people through student exchanges, GSE Teams, RYLA Seminars and interaction with Rotary Clubs.

The Austrian clubs have traditionally shared in these projects, though I have to admit that initially the extent of this cooperation was a little higher in the past. Our clubs are engaged in international cooperation with not only those in the neighboring districts but also clubs in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States or indeed also Asian countries.

We are pleased to note that we are one of the first districts in the former East Bloc to grow to be not only a recipient but also – on many occasions – provider of international assistance. All this, together with the frequent personal visits by RI Presidents to our District, proves that the clubs of our District have become a fully fledged component part of the Rotary International Community.

Looking back, we must be grateful to our Austrian friends, and all those who have laid solid and durable foundations to our activities, for we owe them our ability to meet the Rotary ideals – something they can rightly be proud of and sincerely happy about.



Peter Morawek
Governor of District
1920 in 2008/2009
Member of RC Linz

Political developments and the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 restored all conditions, in the countries concerned, for establishing friendly relations among neighbors.

After decades of separation, the Austrian Rotary Clubs seized the opportunity to support the Rotarian efforts of our Czech and Slovak friends. Many new clubs were founded, and many clubs that had existed since 1925 but were dissolved in 1939 and 1948 were now restored.

I have fond memories from my visits to the Czech Republic, where I could experience this emotional atmosphere as an emissary for the re-establishment of RC Plzeň.

After ten years spent together in District 1920, a new District 2240 was created for our two neighbors – the Czech Republic and Slovakia – regardless of their new state borders.

The many friendly relationships and personal friendships established over time help to further strengthen and foster good-neighborly relations.



Otakar Veselý, PDG
Chairman, Czech-Slovak
Section ICC for Cooper-
ation between D-2240
(ČR/SR) and Austria
Member of RC Český
Krumlov



Herald Marschner, PDG
Chairman, Austrian
Section ICC for
Cooperation with
D-2240 (ČR/SR) in
Austria
Member of RC Enns

For centuries, the regions of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Austria have been very closely interconnected by a multitude of political, family, cultural and economic relationships. These multilateral neighborly relations have always been strong, and though they were mostly friendly, they were frequently burdened by problems and a lack of mutual understanding.

Being a transnational organization, Rotary has committed itself, within the realm of international service, to promote understanding among nations. Therefore the very active International Committee sees its main mission in supporting good-neighborly relations among the three countries and their Rotary Clubs, giving impetus to the effort to improve political and social relations as well.

After a successful decade spent in the fold of District 1920, the new District 2240 continued its Rotarian efforts in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, after 1999. The International Committee supports and widens the scope of Rotary visits, youth camps, lectures and efforts to know each other. All three countries foster intensive exchange by virtue of their unique cultural heritage, economic performance, and heterogeneity.



1905-1989

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

District 66

District 73

Prologue

The year was 1905; the 20th century was young and few people appreciated the historic importance of a meeting of four friends in Chicago that announced the birth of the world's first Rotary Club. Under the leadership of a discrete lawyer, Paul Harris, their initiative grew in the next 15-20 years to become the global community known as Rotary International. Thanks to its tolerant, apolitical character this community survived the turbulent, controversial twentieth century. Moreover, thanks to the abilities, inclinations, moral qualities and concrete actions of its members, amply expressed by its credo, „Service above Self“, this community positively influenced the progress of many areas of human endeavor, and at least partly compensated the hardships to which humankind was exposed during the 20th century.

The year was 1905; a vast empire ruled by the Habsburgs called Austria-Hungary occupied most of Central Europe. Within it were countries which are independent states today: Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The empire extended also to parts of modern Poland, Ukraine, Romania and Serbia. Nobody knew how strong Rotary International would grow in these regions by end of the twentieth century.

Back to the Roots

For centuries, the populations of these territories have been united not only by economic bonds and the exchange of cultural values, but also by the essence of these phenomena, namely permanent migration. If we go into the dim past, we see that, for example, many Bavarians hail from Bohemia and many Austrian families have roots in Bohemia, Moravia or Slovakia. Conversely, Czech kings used to invite German farmers, craftsmen and townspeople to their lands in certain historical periods. Charles IV ruled the German Empire from Prague, and the Habsburg Emperor Rudolph made Prague an important center of European culture. Mozart composed his greatest opera in Prague, people in Vienna love to listen to the music of Dvořák and Smetana, while Janáček and Kafka enjoy global fame. Schiele lived and worked in Český Krumlov, and Prague dissidents moved to Vienna after Prague Spring 1968. It was not a life between or in two different worlds, but life in one world of togetherness and mutual recognition.

At the end of the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy ceased to exist in 1918. Three independent states (Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) rose from its ruins, while part of its territory was taken over by Romania and the restored Poland, and its southern regions teamed up with Serbia and Montenegro to form Yugoslavia; Italy's borders changed slightly, and those of Russia and Germany changed dramatically.

Europe Accepts Rotary

Progressive development of communication and transportation means made it possible to establish ever new

contacts, enabling easier exchange of information and faster dissemination of the Rotarian ideals. By 1912, the first Rotary Clubs outside America were formed in Dublin and London. Continental Europe's first Rotary Club was established in Madrid, in 1920. For the Rotary to start its winning crusade in Europe, it was necessary to overcome the material, political and societal effects of the First World War, and the people and leaders of nations previously hostile to one another had to build mutual trust and understanding.

Historical Associations - Continued

The increasing interest of Europe in Rotary, and Rotary in Europe, basically coincided with the founding of the League of Nations in 1919. Czechoslovakia was one of its founding members. Austria joined the League in 1920. Simultaneously, many other organizations began to work on a broader international level. The RI Headquarters appointed Fred Warren Teele as the coordinator of Rotary activities in Continental Europe and in 1923 its Regional Office opened in Zurich, Switzerland (opening a parallel office in Vienna was also considered).

First Clubs

The first attempts to establish Rotary Clubs in Austria were made in 1921. However, it was not until 1925, when 30 Rotarians were assembled, that the efforts of industrialist Oskar Berl (who came to know Rotary while visiting the United States) and two British residents of Vienna – Frank Molloy (RC Doncaster) and Percy Faber were crowned with success. RC Vienna held its charter meeting on 31 October 1925 in the presence of Fred Warren Teele and 21 guests from England. Emulating Vienna's example, other clubs came into being – in Salzburg and Linz in 1926, Graz and Innsbruck in 1927, and Klagenfurt and Bad Ischl in 1928.

In 1905, when the first Rotary Club was established in the United States, the territories of the states of the present-day Districts 1910, 1911, 1920 and 2240 were parts of Austria-Hungary, a vast monarchy ruled by the Habsburgs (the empire's internal administrative division was different).



In Czechoslovakia, conditions for the advent of Rotary began to shape by 1924. Fred W. Teele inspired a series of preparatory meetings organized by Antonín Sum, a lawyer who later emerged as a respected diplomat. They were hosted by President T.G. Masaryk's son Jan, who had completed his mission as chargé d'affaires in the U.S.A. He assisted the Prague club from its very outset and was its loyal promoter. František J. Vlček, a Czech-born American entrepreneur and member of a Rotary Club in Cleveland, Ohio assisted the Prague club from its outset and was its loyal promoter. The club held its meetings in the Masaryk family residence at Prague Castle. The first Czechoslovak Rotary Club, RC Praha was inaugurated in Prague's Municipal House on 14 September 1925. Two months later the club received its charter in the presence of RI's acting president Fred W. Teele and visiting Rotarians from Austria, Britain, Italy, Switzerland and the United States. One of them was Fred Molloy, who decorated the new club's chairman with a gold chain with the Rotary emblem, a gift from RC Doncaster. At the December meeting, RC Praha received its club flag from the hands of RI General Secretary Chesley R. Perry, one of the closest aides to P. Harris. By the end of 1925, RC Praha had 34 members.

Districts

Within the next two years, Rotary Clubs were established in Bratislava, Brno, Hradec Králové, Karlovy Vary, Pardubice, Plzeň and České Budějovice. Their membership (239) was strong enough to warrant declaring Czechoslovakia Rotary District 66, on 26 September 1927. Josef Schulz of RC Praha (one of directors of the RI Headquarters in Chicago in Rotary 1928/1929, succeeded in this position by Karel Neuwirth of RC Brno in 1936/1937) was elected its first governor. The first two Czechoslovak presidents – Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš – served as honorary governors of the district. The district was inaugurated in Prague's Municipal House in the presence of RI President Arthur H. Sapp, General Secretary Chesley R. Perry, and 200 guests. Officials of Czechoslovak, Austrian and Hungarian clubs held a meeting during the conference. Prague's German-language daily Prager Presse gave extensive coverage to the Czechoslovak Rotarians in several issues.

Multidistrict 73 was established on the basis of one and the same language used in two neighboring states in 1929. It was made of seven Austrian and eight German Rotary Clubs with a combined membership of 510 (Germany's first club, RC Hamburg was established in 1927). Former German chancellor Wilhelm Cuno of Hamburg was elected its first governor for 1929/1930. The inaugural meeting of the district was held in Munich. The district held its first official conference in 1930, in Vienna's Industry House, with the famous opera singer Maria Jeritzka, a native of Brno, Moravia stealing the show at the side program. Industrialist Otto Böhler, Past President of RC Vienna, was RI's First Vice President in 1929/1930 and, one year later, the second governor of D-73.

Club Activities

At the turn of 1920s/30s, Rotarians loved to listen to interesting lectures by their friends and guests, and frequently circulated their transcripts. Busy correspondence between both districts was supported, as of 1929, by Rotary magazines. "Československý rotarián" was published in D-66, and Der Rotarier für Deutschland und Österreich in D-73. Club members channeled support mainly to people in need. Austrian clubs organized soup kitchens for poor families, provided food and clothing, and

looked after the rural population in outlying areas. In Czechoslovakia, virtually all clubs helped to pay for cheap meals in school canteens. Support for young people was another fast-spreading activity. In Czechoslovakia the focus was in cooperation with Boy and Girl Scout units and enabling talented young people to gather experience abroad. In Austria, support for young people acquired many forms. The district organized summer and winter holiday camps and frequent student exchanges; from 1931 it awarded two scholarships every year at The Hague Academy of International Law for Vienna and Graz students respectively. Austria's Rotary Youth Service had acquired the character we know today.

RI World Congress in Vienna

RI Vice President Otto Böhler saw to it that RI's 1931 World Congress take place in Vienna and its area (London, Paris and Nice running as counter-candidates). The future governors from around the world held their working seminar at Austria's Semmering. RC Vienna had a membership of 100 and remained, throughout the pre-World War II period, the largest club of District 73 (Austria and Germany); by 1930/31 there were 31 clubs with 1,153 friends, of which there were, in Austria, 10 clubs with a membership of 334. The RI World Congress, attended by the RI President, was truly a triumphant undertaking. Four thousand three hundred Rotarians and Ladies arrived from all corners of the world by ship, rail and road. Austria's federal president and chancellor were guests of honor, and Karl Krauss' magazine, Die Fackel, headlined its August report with "Comments on Vienna Rotary Congress – Rotarians Spend Ten Million Schillings". Austrian Post issued a series of 50,000 copies of six stamps with a congress print, which were sold out in two days. Foreign delegates, especially those from overseas, were offered trips to interesting sites outside Vienna. One group actually visited Prague.

"Small Committees"

In 1931, Otto Böhler introduced the idea of "Small Committees" on international contacts. The first such committee was to pursue cooperation between Austria, Germany and France. One "Small Committee" was established in 1934 to oversee the interaction of Austrian, Czechoslovak and German Rotary Clubs.

Dusk Sets In

In 1932-1937 the German part of D-73 experienced a protracted crisis with a bitter end. The Nazis had zeroed in on the Rotary Clubs since their ascent to power (NSDAP members being repeatedly prohibited from entering RCs). They were especially irritated by Rotary's racial and religious tolerance, internationalism and democratic leanings. The situation came to a head in 1932, when "Germany's Mysterious Men" was published in an attack against Rotary. In 1933, the NSDAP became the only permitted political party in Germany. One year later, Adolf Hitler declared the end of Republican Germany and the "Nuremberg Laws" were passed "in protection of German citizenship and German blood and honor". It was clear that consensus was not possible. The German Rotarians gave up fighting and dissolved their clubs in 1937 (44 clubs with a combined membership of 1,082). The developments in Germany had an impact on the situation of the Austrian part of D-73. There were 11 clubs in 1932 and none other was added by 1938. Their

membership was stagnant, rapidly falling from 1937 in spite of the positive treatment of Rotary by Austria's leaders. Many Austrian politicians were Rotarians (including the Mayor of Innsbruck) and the movement could also rely on prominent artists and engineers. In 1934 Austria welcomed a second RI president (Nelson). The chief emeritus of the Bundestheater and Salzburg Rotarian Franz Schneiderhahn became Vice President (1934/35) and Director (1936/37) of RI. In 1936, two special guests visited a district conference in Salzburg (attended by 250 German Rotarians) – the Austrian president and the country's chancellor – to award several Rotarians; something like that was no longer possible in Germany.

The more the continuing growth of Nazism eroded relations between Austrian and German clubs, the busier Austria's Rotarians were in establishing new contacts among themselves and with friends in the neighboring countries. They made countless visits to Czechoslovak clubs. The Linz Rotarians travelled to Bohemia, and their colleagues in Vienna, Baden and Wiener Neustadt visited Moravia and Slovakia.

After the dissolution of German Rotary Clubs in 1937, the Austrian clubs of D-73 (Rotary Austria) found themselves alone, forcibly abandoned by members with German passports. Within days of Austria's annexation by Hitler's Third Reich, the Austrian Rotary Clubs were disbanded in March 1938. Franz Schneiderhahn, the District Governor in 1937/1938 defected to the mountains, burning all documents and dying there six months later. RC Innsbruck first president Friedrich Reitlinger with his daughter – both assimilated Jews – died in March 1938 in unclear circumstances. The end of Rotary in Austria was marked by many personal tragedies.

In 1938, the Rotary Community was represented in 60 countries, associating 4,500 clubs and 187,000 members. As far as the number of Rotary Clubs was concerned, Czechoslovakia (49) ranked third in Europe, after Britain and France, and first in the world in terms of Rotary per capita (1,297).

The Munich Agreements, signed in September 1938 by the Nazi Third Reich and Italy with Czechoslovakia's allies Britain and France, decreased the territory and population of Czechoslovakia by about one fifth. In the middle of March 1939, Hitler seized what little remained of Czechoslovakia and its Rotary District 66 after the Munich diktat. Hitler's troops occupied Prague and a Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established within the Third Reich; a Slovak State (First Slovak Republic) was proclaimed and Ruthenia (Trans-Carpathian Ukraine) became part of fascist Hungary. Czechoslovakia ceased to exist and with it, also the Czechoslovak Rotary Clubs and their District 66.

Second World War

Friends continued to meet even in conditions of Austria's annexation by Germany in the period from March 1938 to April 1945. It is known that 30 friends continued to meet in Vienna, and a similar group met in shared premises in Salzburg and Linz. In Graz, Rotary continued to work under the guise of a skittles club. They did not contemplate opposition and resistance, but these old Rotarians never gave up their mutual bonds so as not to lose contact. However, forced emigration, war, the Holocaust, and air raids took their toll of the size of these groups. There exist no reports on Rotary meetings in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the Slovak State. But according to post-war

statistics, 108 Czechoslovak Rotarians perished in Nazi concentration camps and on German execution grounds.


Post-war Development

Austria and Czechoslovakia restored their state independence immediately after the end of World War II. However, each of them followed a different developmental path until 1990. Consequently, their Rotarian histories were also very different.

Czechoslovak Rotary Clubs began to revive their activities during 1945. Their prominent moving agent was Jan Masaryk, then serving as Czechoslovakia's minister of foreign affairs. British Rotarians in particular offered assistance and lasting friendship. In 1947, officials of 11 clubs of District 66 visited all the 28 active Czechoslovak clubs. In the same year, the renewed District 66 held its first and unfortunately last conference in Plzeň. RI President Richard C. Hedke took part in it. The conference discussed a remarkable project of new-type high school, pursued by members of RC Poděbrady (with Václav Havel and Miloš Forman among its students). However, the promising development was nipped at its bud when the Communists took power in 1948. The Rotary Clubs were dissolved and the Iron Curtain fell.

In Austria, unsuccessful attempts to restore Rotary Clubs were undertaken in 1946 (Linz and Steyr). The situation was complicated by the fact that Austria was run by the victorious allies until 1955 (when a state treaty was signed and neutrality declared). Its first Rotary Clubs formed in 1949/1950 in the U.S. (Linz, Steyr, Salzburg), British (Graz, Klagenfurt) and French (Innsbruck) zones. As part of the Soviet zone, Vienna had to wait till 1953. In 1950-1956, The RI Headquarters treated Austria as a special administrative area, with the establishment and development of Rotary Clubs supervised by an RI Administrative Advisor. In 1956, however, the existence of 18 clubs with a total of 555 members warranted the establishment of District 99, renamed District 181 for the next 20 years in 1957/1958, and District 191 in 1977. By the end of the 1970s, there were 60 clubs with 1,780 members in Austria and it was decided that the district would be divided in two. Consequently, there have been two Rotary Districts in Austria since 1 July 1980 – District 191 (South) and District 192 (North). Wolfgang Wick of RC Klagenfurt was one of the prominent figures in the post-war development of Rotary in Austria and the world at large. He progressed from District Governor to RI Director and ultimately also Vice President of RI; however, his nomination for RI President in 1976/1977 was defeated.

The new Austrian Rotary Clubs followed up on the pre-war tradition of activities. The SOS – Children's Villages project has been kept alive since 1955. Initially implemented in Austria, this project has spread to distant countries, as far away as Nepal, Sri Lanka or Indonesia. Austrian Rotarians have organized many skiing and language-teaching camps in the Alps; Europe's first Interact Club was founded in Austria, in 1964, and Austria's Rotaract Club network is highly impressive (40 in D-1910 and D-1920). Austria's own Rotary Youth Exchange Programs for university students were founded at first in Vienna (1956) and then also in Salzburg (1961). As far as the student exchange programs are concerned, Austria (D-1910 and D-1920) with 900 participants every year belongs to the most active Rotary countries (accountable for 10% of the annual exchange supervised by RI). All these examples influenced and inspired the new clubs the Austrian Rotarians helped to restore or found in the neighboring countries after 1989.



1989-1999

MULTIDISTRICTS

District 1910

District 1920

Key Changes in the Region

The end of the 20th century and the start of the new millennium, when the Rotary International community began to restore its traditions in Central and Eastern Europe, was a period of momentous societal change. Even though RI is a non-political community, the change was intensive enough to logically influence its development. Let us examine the timeline of at least the events that were crucial to our topic:

- 1989** Soviet Bloc breaks up
- 1990** Czechoslovakia's Rotary tradition experiences its revival, thanks mainly to one of Austria's two Districts, D-192, which transforms into an international multidistrict as new clubs emerge
- 1991** Rotary districts re-numbered on global scale, Multidistrict D-192 (Western Austria) newly designated D-1920
- 1992** Twelve countries form European Union
- 1993** Czechoslovakia splits up to form the Czech Republic (ČR) and Slovakia (SR), Rotary clubs in both new states continue to be part of Multidistrict D-1920
- 1995** Austria joins the European Union; two Rotary Multidistricts (D-1910 and D-1920) active in its territory exceed the limits of Austria and the EU
- 1999** New Rotary Multidistrict D-2240 created for ČR and SR; D-1920 regains its national character and remains operational in Western Austria
- 2004** Both countries of Rotary District D-2240 – ČR and SR – become EU Member States

Special Extension Areas

In 1987 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL decided to support humanitarian and educational projects in the countries where Rotary activities were earlier interrupted or in countries that previously were not open to Rotary ideals. This support was entrusted to The Rotary Foundation and some District Governors, or rather to special Committees of experienced Rotarians from the existing Districts territorially closest to the countries. Based on an analysis of local conditions, so-called Special Extension Areas were established. District 191 (Austria-East) operated in Hungary and Yugoslavia. District 192, Austria-West, (Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg) was asked to oversee support for Czechoslovakia. Searching for the guardians of Czechoslovakia's Rotary traditions, mapping the overall societal situation in that country, carefully establishing contacts and patiently searching for open new minds and suitable candidates for Rotary membership in Czech and Slovak cities – all these endeavors brought fruit in season already in Rotary 1989/1990.

Willibald Egger of RC Linz-Altstadt has actively shared in restoring the Rotary tradition in former Czechoslovakia as D-1920 Governor (1995/1996) and member of RI commissions. Here are his recollections about that period:

To us, the mission to restore or establish Rotary Clubs in Czechoslovakia was both a task accepted on the decision of the Rotary International Headquarters and a challenge as we felt the urgent need to take such action. The idea may have seemed quite utopian, way back in 1987. Yet even though the Iron Curtain was still firmly in place, and relations between the two neighboring countries were severely restricted, they nonetheless existed, notably in mutual trade, scientific exchange, and culture, although they were "properly organized" and closely monitored from above. Obviously, it was easier for Austrians to go to Prague, Brno, Bratislava and elsewhere in Czechoslovakia than for Czechoslovak travelers to make trips to Vienna, Linz or the Alps. Every year, scores of Czech and Slovak émigrés found their new home in Austria, bringing along

fresh and topical information. A deeper look into the situation in Czechoslovakia confirmed that radical reforms were virtually knocking on the door, and were bound to happen in the near future. We may not have been able then to estimate their scope and timeframe, but, as they say, fortune favors the brave. The approach was basically clear: Primarily we worked to restore the Rotary tradition where clubs existed in Czechoslovakia before the Second World War, including smaller towns. Small need to stress all these contacts were strictly on a personal level as any other method would not work. We did not encounter many of those who could still remember, or many descendants of the former Rotarians; we contacted mostly people who vaguely remembered a short Rotary upsurge immediately after the war. Therefore we had to search for and approach other people willing to promote the Rotary idea. Caution had to be applied all the time. We had to be cautious because not every contact's



1990

conscience or intentions were clean and sincere. We found out, however, that in Czechoslovakia at that time, there were many determined, sophisticated people pursuing a variety of interests. Language was no big hurdle in the theater we operated in. The events of November 1989 gave a new momentum to all these activities. Yet as some barriers ceased to apply, new hurdles surfaced. There were problems galore, big and small, but all these are issues one could go on discussing for hours.



Willibald Egger, PDG at one of his many meetings with Magda Prikazsky-Kula, District 2240 Secretary in 2003-2005.

Eastern Europe restores Rotary Clubs

Central and Eastern Europe its first Rotary Clubs emerge by early 1989. Austrian Rotarians (D 191) help to restart RC Budapest while Swedish Rotarians were instrumental in founding the RC in Warsaw; and preparations were underway to form RC Moscow, the first Rotary Club in the Soviet Union. Almost 200 Rotary Clubs were restored or newly established in the region from the second half of 1989 to early 1997. The rapid growth of the Rotary Community after 1990 necessitated new administrative measures. In order to provide more numeric freedom, all districts were renumbered in 1991. In the following text the Austrian districts carry either their older numbers 191 and 192 alternating with their current numbers 1910 and 1920.



Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Jiří Dienstbier dismantle the Iron Curtain, and not only symbolically.

Breaking the Ice

The events that, because of their moderate character and general euphoria, have come to be called "Velvet Revolution" in the Czech Lands and "Gentle Revolution" in Slovakia, were a quick succession of end-of-the-year developments in Czechoslovakia. They were accelerated by the overall international situation as well as by events in the neighboring countries, such as Solidarity's triumph in Poland, the mass exodus of East Germans to Western

Germany in which Prague played a pivotal role, and mainly the final collapse of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. In Czechoslovakia, a massive opposition wave against the regime in power surged after the security forces brutally attacked a peaceful student protest on November 17, 1989, in Prague's Národní Street. A broad civil action platform resulted in Prague under the heading of "Civic Forum" (OF) and in Bratislava as "Public against Violence" (VPN). Under considerable public pressures a "Government of National Understanding" was formed on December 9, Alexander Dubček was elected the speaker of a revamped parliament on December 28, and Václav Havel was elected President of the Republic on December 29, 1989.

Václav Havel is not a Rotarian but he is a symbol of Rotary ideals and traditions. Havel's father, Václav M. Havel, was a prominent 1930s entrepreneur and member of RC Prague. In 1947/48 Václav Havel Jr. was a student of the George of Poděbrady College founded under the patronage of RC Poděbrady, and after 1989 he helped to revive the Rotary Community in Czechoslovakia, and did it to the extent of his duties associated with the High Office of President of the Republic. In 1990, Václav Havel received during the RI World Convention in Portland the highest Rotary Award for International Understanding. He donated the financial reward associated with the prize as a contribution to humanitarian projects sponsored by the Rotary Foundation. In 2006 he was one of the first recipients of the T.J. Baťa Merit Award, inspired by Otakar Veselý, PDG and bestowed as official honour by the RI Governor to District 2240.



Václav Havel frequently travelled around the country while he was Czech president. When visiting Most he called on the local Rotary Club. The picture shows him in the company with the club's president, Academic Painter Karel Bořecký (with club member Stanislav Štýs in the background).

Kicking off to a Start

The breakup of the Soviet Empire enabled the Rotary community to take vigorous action in the preselected "Special Extension Areas". Special commissions were instructed to assist the governors of these areas or the Presidential Extension Advisors (PEAs) and to coordinate their extension efforts with the Board of RI. Under the tenure of RI Director Ulrich Meister, a central coordinating committee was formed in March 1990, with Paul Mailath-Pokorny of RC Wien-Nord (D-191/1910) being its only Austrian member. Paul was also a member of the

Central/Eastern European Extension Committee (CEECE) that shifted to gear in June 1990 (RI President Paulo Costa) as the "New Countries Extension Committee". It had actually existed from 1997/98, in conjunction with the "European Affairs Committee". Among the D-1920 members of both commission were PDGs Willibald Egger of Linz-Altstadt and Helmut Rainer of RC Bad Ischl. The process of restoring the Rotary traditions in former Czechoslovakia was significantly assisted also by Werner Kovac (RC Wien-West, D-1910), and from District 1920, Peter Krön (RC Salzburg), Edward Gordon (RC Salzburg-Nord), Heinrich Brditschka and Hilmar Becker (RC Traun), Kurt Wild (RC Linz-Urfahr), together with Ernst Marschner (RAC Linz), who looked after the development of new Rotaract Clubs.

Until his death in 1996, Viktor A. Straberger of RC Wels was the moving force of the D-192 Working Group (serving as District Governor in 1989/1990); he formulated the basic concept and procedures of reviving the Rotary tradition in Czechoslovakia. In case of District 192, every new club had to find a pilot club and a specific person asked to form a club. In May 1990, a Super Ding conference in Berchtesgaden and Salzburg hosted three neighboring districts – Austria's 191 and 192, together with Bavaria's 184 – during which the Incoming RI President Paulo Costa welcomed the organization's first Rotarians from Hungary. Czechoslovak cities were cited on this occasion and it was obvious that new Rotary Clubs would soon report from there. Priority was given to České Budějovice, Bratislava, Prague, Brno and Plzeň. But it showed in the next decade that it would not do just to employ, for the sake of making an ideal come true, only the enormous personal efforts of the District 192/1920 Governors Straberger Jr., Baschata, Marsoner, Rainer, Wild, Krön, Egger, Buchmeiser, Otto and Watzenböck, who blended their governor's duties towards their Austrian region with intensive efforts to found new Rotary Clubs in Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic and Slovak Republics as of 1993). The district's budget was in need of a financial shot in the arm. In 1991-1994, every member of a Rotary Club in the Austrian part of District 1920 donated 100 schillings in then Austrian currency every year specifically for this purpose. The smaller part of the proceeds (totalling 20,000 in today's money) was used to cover the essential costs of project administration and raised travel expenses (Linz and Banská Bystrica being over 500 kilometres apart) but the bigger part was used in support of new Rotary Clubs.



Unfortunately, Viktor A. Straberger is no more. We bring at least a few quotes published in the Rotary Magazin Monthly while he was still around:

December 1989 (Rotary Magazin 1/1990): "I wrote to all my Czech-speaking friends: Help us find new friends "there on the other side." The Salzburg

Rotarians could found clubs in Prague, those from Linz in Plzeň, and those from Wels in České Budějovice. I keep a Czech textbook in my pocket – Dobry den, Rotary!"

January 1990 (Rotary Magazin 2/1990), on the extension process: "What a year of surprise and joy it was! Let us try and build new bridges; let us support the friends who want to reintroduce Rotary to Eastern Europe. I envision the kind of assistance that enables young people to learn and acquire knowledge and world outlook. Democracy, in

spite of its numerous shortcomings, is the foundation of our existence. Let us work to pass our experience and our Rotarian ethics on to the young people of Eastern Europe."

July 1992 (Rotary Magazin 7/1992), on partnership: "Our friends "over there" are now able to establish clubs; they are grateful for whatever help they get from Austria. While the Austrian clubs really need not to "shy away from making contacts"; our friends are looking for friendship across the border. Go there and look around; invite a friend or two from Czechoslovakia, come back and convince your clubs."

Mushrooming...

During 1990 the condition began ripening for the establishing of Rotary Clubs in at least twelve Czechoslovak cities – Prague, Brno, České Budějovice, Bratislava, Znojmo, Plzeň, Písek, Cheb, Tábor, Karlovy Vary, Banská Bystrica, and Hradec Králové. Their official admission in RI's fold required various periods of time, depending on local conditions. RC Praha was the first to be admitted in RI on 8 June 1990. However, it formally received its RI Charter a few months later, on 2 May 1991 in the presence of RI President Paulo Costa. Its founding was jointly assisted by Austria's RC Salzburg West (D-192) and RC Wien-Stadtpark (D-191) under the guidance of Oskar Weidinger of RC Linz-Süd (D-1920), together with prominent public figures including President Havel's chancellor Karel Schwarzenberg, Austria's Ambassador Karl Petrlík, and Prague Lord Mayor Jaroslav Kořán, who were named honorary members of the club. RC Praha's first President Jiří Vrba, the man who blazed the organizational and administrative trail to founding more new clubs, recalls how difficult it was to convince our friends abroad that the events after November 1989 had really led to a radical change of the Czechoslovak social system, and were irreversible. It was a statement by the Office of the President of the Republic, citing several newly adopted legal standards that eventually proved to be the weightiest argument. After all, President Václav Havel was an embodiment of democratic principles. By mid-June, RC České Budějovice followed suit, with two District 192 clubs (RC Linz-Süd and RC Wels) standing at its cradle, followed by RC Brno in October 1990, co-founded by RC Innsbruck (D-192) and RC Wien-Süd (D-191). In 1991-1996, seventeen Czech and three Slovak clubs were founded and incorporated in RI with the direct support of Austrian clubs.



RC Praha marked the 70th anniversary of its first founding in 1925 at a formal meeting in the Spanish Hall of Prague Castle in the presence of hundreds of guests. Many Austrian friends were in attendance. From the left: Viktor A. Straberger (PDG) from RC Wels, Willibald Egger (DGE) from RC Linz-Altstadt, Peter Krön (DG) from RC Salzburg, Jiří Vrba, president of RC Praha in 1990/1991, Ivan Kaldor (PDG) from D-1840 (Germany) and Michel Tubbs (member of CEECE) from England.

Partnership ties between Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs (today's D-2240) with Austrian Clubs (D-1910/D-1920)

Country	Rotary Clubs (CZ/SK)	First founding	Founding	Admission Into RI	Sponsor Clubs – Austria	District
CZ	RC Praha	1925	1990	8. 6. 1990	RC Salzburg West	1920
					RC Wien-Stadtpark	1910
CZ	RC České Budějovice	1926	1990	13. 6. 1990	RC Linz-Süd	1920
					RC Wels	1920
					Only Partner Club	RC Freistadt
CZ	RC Brno	1926	1990	10. 10. 1990	RC Innsbruck	1920
					RC Wien-Süd	1910
					Only Partner Club	RC Weinviertel-Marchfeld
SK	RC Bratislava	1926	1990	25. 1. 1991	RC Salzburg	1920
					RC Wien-Schwechat	1910
CZ	RC Znojmo	new club	1990	11. 4. 1991	RC Geras-Waldviertel	1910
CZ	RC Plzeň	1926	1991	29. 5. 1991	RC Grieskirchen	1920
					RC Linz	1920
CZ	RC Písek	1928	1991	6. 6. 1991	RC Linz-Urfahr	1920
CZ	RC Cheb/Eger	new club	1991	28. 6. 1991	RC Gmunden	1920
CZ	RC Tábor	1928	1991	25. 9. 1991	RC Steyr	1920
CZ	RC Karlovy Vary	1926	1991	27. 2. 1992	RC Bad Gastein	1920
SK	RC Banská Bystrica	1935	1992	21. 5. 1992	RC Bad Ischl	1920
CZ	RC Hradec Králové	1926	1992	3. 11. 1992	RC Hall in Tirol	1920
CZ	RC Praha Staré Město	new club	1992	23. 2. 1993	RC Linz-Altstadt	1920
CZ	RC Poděbrady	1928	1992	16. 3. 1993	RC Kirchdorf a.d. Krems	1920
SK	RC Piešťany	new	1992	19. 3. 1993	RC Salzburg-Nord	1920
CZ	RC Ostrava	1929	1993	9. 11. 1993	RC Vorarlberg	1920
CZ	RC Zlín	1935	1993	16. 11. 1993	RC Wels	1920
CZ	RC Liberec-Jablonec	1936	1993	23. 2. 1994	RC Innsbruck Goldenes Dachl	1920
CZ	RC Jičín	new	1993	10. 3. 1993	RC Bischofshofen	1920
					RC Traun	1920
CZ	RC Český Krumlov	new	1994	24. 1. 1995	RC Rohrbach	1920
					RC Gmunden	1920
CZ	RC Přerov	1935	1995	5. 4. 1995	RC Geras-Waldviertel	1910
CZ	RC Jindřichův Hradec	new	1995	22. 8. 1995	RC Wels-Burg	1920
CZ	RC Praga Caput Regni	new	1996	20. 8. 1996	RC Linz-Altstadt	1920
Since 1999						
CZ	RC Uherský Brod			Only Partner Club	RC Eferding	1920

Share of other countries' Rotary Clubs in establishing clubs in the Czech and Slovak Republics within D-1920

Country	District	Sponsor Clubs	Founding	Admission Into RI	Rotary Clubs (CZ/SK)	First founding	Country
D	1880	RC Regensburg	1992	23. 2. 1993	RC Praha Staré Město	new club	CZ
D	1880	RC Cham	1996	23. 5. 1996	RC Klatovy	new club	CZ
D	1880	RC Weiden	1991	27. 2. 1992	RC Karlovy Vary	1926	CZ
D	1840	RC Nördlingen	1993	10. 3. 1993	RC Jičín	new club	CZ
GB	1080	RC Bury St. Edmunds	1992	16. 3. 1993	RC Poděbrady	1928	CZ
CH	2000	RC St.Galen	1993	23. 2. 1994	RC Liberec-Jablonec	1936	CZ
US	6650	RC Salem (Ohio)	1996	12. 2. 1997	RC Spišská Nová Ves	new club	SK

Czech and Slovak sponsoring clubs in 1990-1999 (D-1920)

Country	Admission Into RI	Sponsor Clubs	Founding	Admission Into RI	Rotary Clubs (CZ/SK)	First founding	Country
SK	1991	RC Bratislava	1992	21. 5. 1992	RC Banská Bystrica	1935	SK
CZ	1990	RC České Budějovice	1993	22. 9. 1993	RC Jihlava	1947	CZ
			1995	22. 8. 1995	RC Jindřichův Hradec	new club	CZ
			1994	16. 11. 1993	RC Zlín	1935	CZ
CZ	1990	RC Brno	1994	29. 6. 1995	RC Prostějov	1935	CZ
			1995	5. 4. 1995	RC Přerov	1935	CZ
			1995	2. 6. 1995	RC Třebíč	1937	CZ
			1996	23. 5. 1996	RC Olomouc	1933	CZ
			1995	29. 6. 1995	RC Pardubice	1926	CZ
SK	1992	RC Banská Bystrica	1995	27. 7. 1995	RC Nitra	new club	SK
			1998	4. 10. 1998	RC Zvolen	new club	SK
CZ	1991	RC Plzeň	1996	23. 5. 1996	RC Klatovy	new club	CZ
CZ	1992	RC Karlovy Vary	1991	23. 5. 1996	RC Most	new club	CZ
CZ	1993	RC Jičín	1997	30. 6. 1997	RC Vrchlabí	new club	CZ
CZ	1993	RC Zlín	1998	27. 10. 1997	RC Kroměříž	1937	CZ
SK	1993	RC Piešťany	1996	6. 6. 1996	RC Poprad	1935	SK
			1993	14. 6. 1996	RC Žilina	new club	SK
			1998	7. 5. 1998	RC Liptovský Mikuláš	new club	SK
CZ	1996	RC Praha Staré Město	1997	26. 1. 1998	RC Prague International	new club	CZ
CZ	1996	RC Praga Caput Regni	1998	20. 2. 1998	RC Praha City	new club	CZ
			1997	18. 8. 1998	RC Brandýs-Boleslav	new club	CZ
CZ	1995	RC Pardubice	1998	30. 3. 1999	RC Trutnov	new club	CZ

Altogether, 26 Austrian Rotary Clubs shared in this process of rebirth. Twenty-two clubs were from D-1920, with RC Gmunden, RC Linz Altstadt and RC Wels each founding two clubs in the Czech Lands. And from District 1910, three Vienna clubs shared in the founding of Rotary Clubs in today's D-2240 (Czech Republic and Slovak Republic) together with RC Geras/Waldviertel, which founded two clubs. Another two Austrian clubs from both districts subsequently established partnerships with the new clubs. A total of 26 partnerships were established between the D-1920 Rotary Clubs and their counterparts in the Czech Republic (23) or Slovakia (3), while six partnerships were struck between the D-1910 clubs and their opposite numbers in the Czech Republic (5) or Slovakia (1). In the event, 32 bonds were ultimately made between the Austrian Rotary Clubs (D-1910 and D-1920) and the clubs of today's District 2240 (Czech Republic and Slovak Republic). RC Brno and RC České Budějovice each have friendly ties with three Austrian clubs, while RC Praha, RC Český Krumlov and RC Jičín each foster friendship with two Austrian clubs. Some intensive past contacts have ceased to apply but those that remained have been strengthened and remain strong as ever.

In 1991-1996, Austria's D-1910 and D-1920 clubs were assisted in their effort to restore Rotary traditions in today's Czech Republic by clubs in other countries. They were five German clubs – RC Weiden, RC Regensburg and RC Cham from D-1880 and RC Nördlingen of D-1840, Britain's RC Bury St. Edmunds (D-1080), and Switzerland's RC St. Galen (D-2000). In Rotary 1996/1997, RC Salem, Ohio (D-6650) founded Slovakia's RC Spišská Nová Ves. Other Rotary Clubs in these and other countries lent a helping hand to Czech and Slovak Rotarians when their clubs were already set up and going.

In 1993, existing Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs embarked on the process of establishing new clubs within D-1920. RC České Budějovice blazed the trail by inspiring the foundation of Rotary Clubs in Jihlava and Jindřichův Hradec. RC Brno proved its efficiency by sponsoring five new clubs in the Czech Republic, while RC Piešťany founded three new Rotary Clubs in Slovakia. RC Praga Caput Regni (Czech Republic) and RC Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) each founded two clubs. Ever since 1997, new Czech and Slovak clubs have been exclusively founded by in-country sponsoring clubs. However, the involvement of foreign RCs is not ruled out.

The years 1990-1999 saw the founding and RI incorporation of 33 Rotary Clubs in the Czech Republic and 9 in Slovakia, making a total of 42 new clubs with a membership in excess of 1,000; all these ultimately formed Rotary District 2240.

Discovering Rotary Principles

It was not only frequent visits of Austrian Rotarians to Czech and Slovak cities and enormous involvement and patience on the part of Rotary District 1920 officials, but also the regular participation of Czech and Slovak Rotarians in that district's annual PETS seminars, meetings and conferences that fostered the development of newly founded Rotary Clubs. New members learned from veterans to organize Rotary life, find their bearings in the ramified system of Rotary activities, and use their new findings in the advancement of their communities. Suddenly the world opened for them, their selfconfidence was rising, and before long they began to savour the success of their own projects or those carried out in conjunction with foreign clubs and based on the Rotary Foundation's Matching Grants. In 1997 Rotary began to embrace the principle of electronic



It was common in District 1920 to present every new club with a RI Charter and a travelling historical lamp – the blue taillight of a train. In 1992 one such lamp was presented to RC Hradec Králové.

communication (document distribution via e-mail, putting districts on the web) which, once the teething problems had been overcome, has greatly facilitated and expedited the exchange of information.

Several Czech and Slovak Rotarians would later hold various positions in District 1920 and sit in the joint bodies of both Austrian districts – 1910 and 1920 – meeting fellow Rotarians from Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia. In the Rotarian zeal of 1991/1992, Jaroslav Wunsch of RC Praha, Anton Kollar of RC Brno and Jiří Čapek of RC České Budějovice were the first to operate on this level. Other officials followed suit as the district agenda expanded. Let us mention Karel Cidlinský of RC Brno, Herbert Jarošek of RC Plzeň, Petr Mahel of RC Znojmo, Pavel Svítíl of RC Jihlava or Karol Fabian from RC Banská Bystrica, together with the people devoted to service to the youth – Bohuslava Fillová of RC Znojmo and Iwar Klimeš of RC Bratislava. Four Czech and Slovak Rotaract Clubs also had their representatives – Katarina Kubovčáková from RAC Bratislava and Vojtěch Havránek from RAC Plzeň (a member of RC Praha Classic since 2007). RC Bratislava



Český Krumlov has been the Mecca of Czech-Slovak-Austrian Rotarian cooperation since the 1990s.

D-1920 Governors 1987-1999

Rotary Year	Governor	Rotary Club	Town of District Conference	RC CZ/SK
1987/1988	Norbert Heitz	RC Bludenz		-
1988/1989	Erich Wayand (+)	RC Kirchdorf		-
1989/1990	Viktor A. Straberger (+)	RC Wels	Salzburg (A) and Bad Reichenhall (D) with D-184 */	2
1990/1991	Wolfgang Baschata (10)	RC Gmunden	Gmunden	6
1991/1992	Helmut Marsoner	RC Innsbruck	Bad Ischl	3
1992/1993	Helmut Rainer (7)	RC Bad Ischl	Innsbruck	4
1993/1994	Kurt Wild (6)	RC Linz-Urfahr	Linz	5
1994/1995	Peter Krön (5)	RC Salzburg	Salzburg	5
1995/1996	Willibald Egger (4)	RC Linz-Altstadt	Bad Leonfelden (A) and Český Krumlov (CZ)	7
1996/1997	Rudolf Buchmeiser (3)	RC Rohrbach	Aigen-Schlögl	3
1997/1998	Franz-Xaver Otto (1)	RC Linz	Linz	4
1998/1999	Thomas Watzenböck (2)	RC Kirchdorf	Praha (CZ) **/	3
		total		42

*/ guest: President RI elect Paulo Costa
 **/ guest: President RI elect Carlo Ravizza



First Governor of newly established District 2240 Dobroslav Zeman (8) and his successor Ivan Belan in the company of most of the past governors of District 1920 (see table).

(notably Dušan Paulík, Milan Profant, Ivan Mičík and Oskar Markovič) significantly shared in District 1920 activities in the late 1990s. Jozef Potužník (RC České Budějovice), Gert Rienmüller (RC Praha Staré Město), Gustav Niepel and Viktor Nižňanský from RC Piesňany, Jiří Tichý (RC Jičín-Vrchlabí), Luděk Trnka (RC Praha) or Petr Lapačka (RC Tábor) were frequent occurrences at the district's working meetings. They soaked in positive experience. Many of them used it for a good purpose in their capacity of officials of the new Czech-Slovak District 2240. This is especially true in the case of the district's future governors – Dobroslav Zeman (RC Plzeň), Ivan Belan (RC Banská Bystrica), Milan Roch (RC Praha) and František Ryneš (RC Třebíč).

Faithful to his motto, "Let's cover the trenches", Governor Willibald Egger decided to hold the 1996 Annual Conference of District 1920 in two neighboring towns – Upper Austria's Bad Leonfelden and South Bohemia's Český Krumlov. His decision was highly significant for both the Rotary environment and its liaison with the public.

Social Events

There were various social events to enable an exchange of information and experience. In 1994, the Rotary Clubs Praha and Praha-Staré Město hired a ROTARY EXPRESS steam train at Prague's Wilson Station, comprising President Masaryk's historical salon car. It was a return trip to South Bohemia. The event commenced with a lecture in the Wilson Station President Lounge, where there were meetings with city fathers and platform concerts as the train stopped in Tábor and České Budějovice, and culminated in a gala evening in the Riding Hall of the Český Krumlov Chateau. More than 300 Rotarians from 10

countries took the ride along with a number of guests. Chief among them were Transport Minister Jan Stráský, Prague Mayor Jan Koukal, and many other notables. One year later, an equally successful but noticeably more representative meeting marked 70 years of the first establishment of RC Praha in 1925, in the Spanish Hall of the Prague Castle. Both events received broad media coverage.



Good Luck Badge

There were many roads to resuming Rotary Club activities. Ivan Belan, PDG, founding President of the new-era RC recalls his first encounter with Rotary:

The cogwheel as an emblem of the worldwide Rotary International organization first caught my fancy in the 1960s and 70s when I collected stamps and sporadically came across exotic specimens with Rotary symbols. I was



Ivan Belan, PDG (right) during a conversation with Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan, a loyal supporter of the Rotary Community.

past forty when gained a deeper insight on the mission of the Rotary Community. When I met with my uncle on a foreign trip in early 1989 I noticed he was wearing a cogwheel pin on his lapel with the inscription: Charter President. I had him explain to me virtually all about the Rotary Community. My uncle was a very active Rotarian and when he saw I liked the badge, he removed it from his lapel and gave it to me, saying he would be happy if it was not just a keepsake but a commitment for me to earn my spurs as a Rotarian. Childhood friend Peter Michalica, a virtuoso violinist and long-time resident of Bratislava, contacted me in late 1990 and asked me what I knew about Rotary. He was quite pleased by the scope of my knowledge. He said Slovakia's first Rotary Club was in the making in Bratislava and invited me to a Charter of his club – RC Bratislava. I liked the idea so much I decided to get involved and my efforts resulted in founding a second Rotary Club in Slovakia. I was proud to see my uncle attend the formal presentation of the RI Charter to our Club. Since then I have worn the Charter President badge with clear conscience and a feeling of purpose.

First Activities

From their inception, the Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs reported numerous activities with the help of foreign clubs (not only from District 1920). As the former Soviet Bloc countries began to open themselves to the world, high school exchange programs and Service to the Youth summer holiday camps were most welcome as they were relatively accessible. In 1994-1999, a total of 156 students (83 outbound and 73 inbound) participated in long-term exchange programs. The exchange students formed the Rotex CZ Club in order to further their new friendships. In the newly established District 2240, almost one thousand students participated in two-way exchanges and an independent Rotex Club Slovakia was established. Under the auspices of the Rotary Clubs, young people began to organize their Rotaract Clubs. Their number gradually rose from four clubs formed in 1993-1998 (RAC Praha, RAC Bratislava, RAC Plzeň and RAC Banská Bystrica) to eight RACs in the Czech Republic and five in Slovakia. Suffice it to recall that on two occasions (2000 and 2004) Prague hosted international conferences of the European Rotaract Information Centre (E.R.I.C), founded in 1988 in Belgium.

Czech and Slovak Rotarians gathered their first experience in organizing Group Study Exchange programs (GSE) in District 1920. GSE members from both countries were sent to the United States within the Austrian teams as early as 1993 and 1994. By 1997 Ivan Belan (RC Banská Bystrica) was leading an independent GSE team, made up exclusively of Czech and Slovak participants, on a visit to Texas



Austrian friends were an example for the Czech and Slovak Rotarians to emulate especially by activities in support of young people.

(District 5890). In 1998, Dobroslav Zeman (RC Plzeň) headed a team of four young Austrian experts dispatched to New Zealand (District 9980).

Many humanitarian projects were organized in conjunction with international partners and supported by Matching Grants awarded by the Rotary Foundation. Clubs frequently collected project money through fundraising concerts. Where clubs were active it was possible to buy special medical equipment, upgrade the equipment of miscellaneous social care institutions or buy minivans for client transportation, secure compensation aids for handicapped clients and establish several sheltered workshops. Some clubs focused their attention on drug prevention, hippo-therapy and art monument conservation. In terms of material assistance and moral support, few other projects exceed the importance of helping the victims of massive floods in large parts of northern Moravia in 1997. Many projects acquired a long-term character and continued to develop even after 1999 when District 2240 was established.

ARPIDA

At the cradle of České Budějovice's ARPIDA Children's Center providing comprehensive (social, health and



educational) rehabilitation programs for 80 affected children and outpatient care for hundreds of children from the area, there was, in the 1990s, a Rotarian and Paul Harris Fellow, Miroslav Ciboch. This establishment is permanently in the focus of attention of not only RC České Budějovice but also the neighbouring RC Český Krumlov, as well as Rotary Clubs in Austria. Under the Children's Opportunities Grant Program, RC Český Krumlov initially received an US \$ 20,000 Rotary Foundation donation to commission a custom-equipped minivan to carry handicapped children from the area to the ARPIDA Center every day. The project was realized in collaboration with the Knights-of-Malta Order which shoulders the operating costs. In 2000, RC České Budějovice in conjunction with Austria's District 1920 and California's District 5220, using a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant, helped to extend the operations of the Center. The ARPIDA Center acquired a

handicapped lift which made it possible to revamp special classrooms and treatment facilities and move some of them to the attic of the building. Subsequently, the Center acquired crucial medical equipment. The total value of Rotary assistance to handicapped children and their parents had thus grown by almost 80,000 US \$.

Rotary Handicamp Březejc

The Březejc Rehabilitation Center in the Bohemian-Moravian Uplands, a specialized establishment of the Brno Institute of Social Care for Children and Young People, has been a haven since 1991 for physically and mentally challenged children and their parents sent there by Rotary Clubs from not only the Czech Republic and Slovakia but from all over Europe and some other regions. Scores of them have relaxed there. Many children are confined to wheelchairs but this does not restrict the choice of games and pastimes organized by trained assistants and instructors. The Handicamp idea was started in 1991 by Jiří Podlucký, a Rotarian and director of the institute. He found the support of not only RC Brno's Founding President Antonín Kolář but also Austria's District 1910 which helped to finance the Rotary Handicamps until 1998. Having to carry the costs single-handedly since the establishment of the Czech and



Slovak District 2240, the Club opted for a biannual periodicity. But change came about in 2004. Thanks to the forthcoming attitudes of the District Youth Service, the Březejc Rotary Handicamp started to receive financial contributions from the District. DG Viktor Prkaszský and his successors assumed personal patronage of the project. This enabled its Brno organizers to increase the number of clients and extend certain services. Fourteen Handicamps were organized by 2008.

Viktor Straberger Scholarships

In 1996, Austrian, Czech and Slovak Rotarians and their friends in many countries were saddened to hear about the death of the prominent Upper Austria lawyer Viktor Straberger, a member of RC Wels and Governor of District 191/1910 in 1989/1990. From 1987 till his death he worked selflessly to help establish Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs. An endowment was established in his name, after his demise, to provide one-year scholarships designed exclusively for Czech and Slovak university students. This Foundation was endowed by significant financial contributions by the members of RC Wels and virtually by all clubs in District 1920. During 1997-2003, ten Czech and Slovak university students availed themselves of Viktor Straberger Scholarships.

Rehabilitation Center

Early in March 1999, the Český Krumlov District Hospital launched a center for testing and provision of a range of rehabilitation and compensation aids. Short-term patients can rent aids for the duration of their rehabilitation treatment programs. Permanently handicapped patients test their compensation aids in the center and then decide



if they need them permanently. This half-a-million-crown project (today cca 20 000 Euro), which took three years to complete, was commissioned by RC Český Krumlov on the initiative of its members Otakar Veselý, PP, and Daniela Vondrová. Significant contributions were made by the Austrian District 1920 (RC Rohrbach and RC Gmunden) and German Clubs (RC Altötting-Burghausen, D-1840 / RC Freyung-Grafenau, D-1840 / RC Bad Salzungen, D-1950). The project was supported by a Matching Grant of The Rotary Foundation. Its significance was highlighted, during the inauguration ceremony; by D-1920 Governor Thomas Watzenböck and the Past Governor and RC Český Krumlov founder Rudolf Buchmeiser. In attendance were officials of the District Branch of the General Health Insurance Company (VZP) and the Association of Physically Handicapped People. With Rotarian help, the center is constantly upgraded with new compensation aids. For ten years now it has offered its services to clients from all over the Český Krumlov area.

Hospital in Zambia

In Rotary 1998/1999, when a Czech medical team was dispatched to operate on 40 cataract patients in Zambia, none of those involved anticipated such a rapid growth of this joint activity of RC Praha (then D-1920) and Zambia's RC Chingola (D-9210) in the next couple of years. It started as a field project jointly conducted by Czech doctors and a local health care organization, The Flying Doctors of Zambia. During their nine days in Zambia the members of the team covered the distance of 2,400 km by car and 2,500 km on board a small plane. All surgeries were successful. In addition, two lectures were delivered to Zambian doctors on the special cataract operating method used. It was an exceptional project not only in terms of the method applied and the direct participation of Czech specialists, but also because its budget was fairly steep by both Czech and Zambian standards, amounting to USD 62,000. In addition to sponsors, the NEW VISION project was assisted also by partner clubs - RC Nürnberg-Neumarkt (Germany) and Norway's RC Oslofjord, which bought and donated 2,000 pairs of glasses to the Zambian patients. Funds were obtained also with the help of a Matching Grant from The Rotary Foundation. Heartened by the successful mission and newly gained experience, the project's brainfather, Dr. Stanislav Kusý started building an international clinic in Zambia's capital, Lusaka. He gained the support of not only



Dr. Stanislav Kusý often travels hundreds of kilometers from Lusaka to see his patients.

the Rotary Clubs mentioned, but also the Czech foreign and health ministries and foreign partners under development cooperation programs. Today the clinic is staffed by mixed teams of Czech, Slovak and Zambian doctors, nurses and students. Every year they provide free healthcare treatment to around 7,000 patients. The more affluent patients receive paid treatment, which helps fund the clinic's operation. The clinic runs regular nurse and midwife training courses and trainees even use Czech-made mopeds, because there are too many patients in Zambia and specialist doctors are hard to find. Suffice it to know that there is one eye doctor for every million of patients! A mobile clinic regularly visits outlying areas. Its staff routinely sees 150-200 patients per day, most of them HIV-positive. The Lusaka clinic runs a wide range of welfare, healthcare, cultural and social projects. Thus, the Street Children project assists orphans whose parents died of AIDS. Young Zambians acquire carpentry skills in a workshop taught by a Czech professional instructor. Remote adoption of Zambian children to help them pay school fees is also a successful project. Zambians truly appreciate what the clinic has been doing, and its contributions have been repeatedly praised by the First Lady, the wife of President Mwanawasa. In 2008 this project earned a high RI award.

TheWorld Takes Note

The key significance of social change in East/Central Europe in the context of the World Rotary Community was corroborated by fairly frequent visits by RI Presidents and the holding of Presidential Conferences in the region. In May 1991, RI President Paulo Costa, escorted by District 1920 Governor Wolfgang Baschata, was witness to the establishment of RC Praha, RC Brno and RC Bratislava, to



During their visit to Bratislava in 2005, RI President William Boyd (center) and his wife Lorna met with Slovak President Ivan Gašparovič (left) and First Lady Silvia. The D-2240 Rotarians were represented at the meeting by District Governor Otakar Veselý (right).

which he personally handed documents confirming their admission to our community. RI President Herbert G. Brown paid a brief visit to Prague in 1996. District 1920 Governor Willibald Egger welcomed him in the presence of representatives of then Czech and Slovak clubs. In 1997, a conference of RI President Luis V. Giay and Rotary officials from all around Europe was convened in Prague. The delegates especially welcomed the birth of District 2230 comprising Poland, Ukraine and Belarus – the first beyond the former Iron Curtain. In addition to District 1920 Governor Rudolf Buchmeiser the conference also heard RC Praha President Milan Roch speak about two forcible breaks in his club's activities and his experience in restoring them. The RI President's March 1999 Conference was convened in Dresden in the eastern part of Germany. RI's Acting President James L. Lacy gave the Conference a fitting motto – "Ten Years after Rotary's Comeback to Central and Eastern Europe". The main part of the conference discussed the motto. District 1920 Governor Thomas Watzemböck, together with Czech and Slovak delegates of the budding District 2240 briefed those present about the situation in the situation in our countries. Rotarians Dobroslav Zeman of Plzeň, then a DGE; and Ivan Belan and Shawn Landres of RC Banská Bystrica gave examples of successful renewal and resumption of the Rotary Movement in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and highlighted problems encountered by Club members. However, the most valuable input came in the form of take-home experience and findings. Within a couple of



The last RI President to visit D-2240 to date was Dong Kurn (D.K.) Lee with his wife, Young Ja Chung (left), in 2007. They were welcomed to Prague by Jozefa Poláková (right), the District's first woman governor.

months after the conference, by July 1, 1999, our Clubs would start a life of their own without the helping hand of Austria's District 1920. And this required some preparations! The Conference was attended by 325 Rotarians, 18 members of Rotaract Clubs and 103 guests – in all, 446 participants from 32 countries as wide apart as, say, Ghana and Nepal or Mexico.

RI Presidents kept visiting the Czech and Slovak republics after establishing the new District 2240. In addition to Carlo Ravizza, who attended its inauguration night along with Governor Dobroslav Zeman, we have had a 2001 visit by Richard D. King with an entourage of RI officials, a 2005 visit by William B. Boyd and Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar, and Dong Kurn (D.K.) Lee called on us in 2007. Many RI President's envoys, foreign ambassadors and RC officials have taken part in our District's conferences in the past decade. Five prestigious international economic conferences on the admission of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the EU (1 May 2004) were organized by RC Praha in 1999-2003 with well-known speakers including government officials and those who would later take posts in top EU bodies.



1999-2009

INTER-COUNTRY COMMITTEE

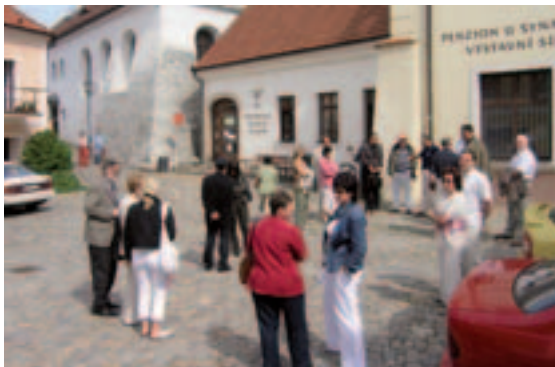
District 1910

District 1920

District 2240

A New District Taking Shape

After 1989, the Rotary Community in the Czech Republic and Slovakia rapidly grew in scope and strength. Rotary International therefore decided, as early as June 1996, to create a new multi-district (international district comprising more than one state) with reference No. 2240 as of 1 July 1999. It comprised 42 Rotary Clubs (33 in the Czech Republic and 9 in Slovakia) with a combined membership of more than one thousand. The working sessions of the Rotarians nominated by their Clubs to the Committee of the new District was held on 5 December 1998 in Prague's Mánes Restaurant. The first official meeting of the new Governor's Consultative Assembly, PETS and District Assembly of Czech and Slovak Rotarians, which finalized the organizational foundations, was held on 26-27 March 1999, in Třebíč in the presence of 107 Rotarians concerned, together with D-1920 Governor Thomas Watzenböck and his 1994/1995 predecessor Peter Krön. District 2240 was later recognized as an international nongovernmental organization active in both states and formally called "Rotary International District 2240 – Czech Republic and Slovak Republic". Its official name was slightly amended by virtually all subsequent District conferences. Its official name as of July 2008 reads: "Rotary International District 2240 – Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, International Not-for-Profit Organization".



In the next decade, Třebíč often played host to Rotary's working and informal meetings. In July 2006 Třebíč hosted an Inter-City Meeting of members of the Rotary Clubs in localities registered as UNESCO global cultural and natural heritage sites.

The Inauguration

The inauguration of the District took place on 26 June 1999 in Prague's Žofín Centre, being preceded by the last joint District Conference of Austrian, Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs. RI's 1999/2000 President Carlo Ravizza announced the birth of the new Rotary District 2240, and he said at the conclusion of his address: "Guided by principles, credibility and systematic thinking that ought to be our compass, let us forge ahead to greet new opportunities that await us in the next century." On behalf of the Austrian Rotarians, Thomas Watzenböck, D-1920 Governor in 1998/1999 wished the Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs a very successful independent journey. He spoke on behalf of his predecessor,



Speaking: Carlo Ravizza, RI President in 1999/2000 (from the left: Thomas Watzenböck, DG 1920 in 1998/99, and Dobroslav Zeman, DG 2240 in 1999/2000).

Viktor Straberger, who did not live to see the auspicious moment. Greeting messages were delivered by prominent public figures from the partner countries. Messages were delivered by Austria's former deputy prime minister Erhard Busek, Czech Minister of Culture Pavel Tigrid, and Slovakia's Fedor Gál. Pomp and circumstance was provided by the chamber music ensemble Virtuosi di Praga, featuring soloist Peter Mihalica of RC Bratislava. Altogether, 166 delegates of Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs attended the solemn act, in addition to about 400 guests from 18 countries; 650 guests attended a gala evening with an attractive cultural program.

In the course of the inaugural act, an official Rotary delegation was received by Senate Vice Presidents Ivan Havlíček and Jaroslava Moserová, and Prague's Lord Mayor Jan Kasl. RI President Carlo Ravizza also paid a visit to



1999

Bratislava, where he was received by Slovakia's First Deputy Prime Minister Pál Csáky and Bratislava's Lord Mayor Jozef Moravčík.

Those present to the inauguration ceremony left Prague with unforgettable memories and a couple of souvenirs to keep. Almanac 1999 is a Czech/English publication that sums up Rotary activities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. By courtesy of RC Pardubice's Pavel Lejhanec, a memorial medal coined by leading Czech artist Michal Vitanovský was issued to mark the district's inauguration. A limited edition of commemorative sheet with Czech and Slovak postage stamps and special prints of post offices in the Prague 1 and Bratislava 1 city districts was issued. Members of RC Safard (Israel – District 2490) planted ten trees in a local grove to mark the birth of Rotary District 2240, and to convey the peace message of Paul P. Harris.

The Latin message DIGNITATIS MEMORES AD OPTIMA INTENTI, engraved in the lintels of the New Renaissance windows of the Assembly Hall of Prague's Old Town Hall was adopted as a permanent theme of Rotary District 2240. Its loose interpretation is that the City fathers of the Capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia, being aware of their dignity, proudly pursue their determination to always act in favor of the best goals.



A recent picture of Thomas Watzenböck in conversation with Jana Cipínová, Past President of RC Český Krumlov.

Thomas Watzenböck, D-1920 Governor in 1998/1999 commented in the introduction to ALMANAC 99 on the establishment of District 2240:

In the course of less than ten years, Rotary ideals successfully took root in the countries of this new district. Through mutual cooperation and joint efforts the necessary structures and personal conditions for the existence and successful development of the new district were set up. My most hearty thanks therefore go for these results to all those who took a share in achieving them, especially all my predecessors, who worked for the realization of this aim. They are all the former governors, starting from Viktor A. Straberger, whose ideals and aims find worthy fulfilment in the founding of this new district.

Basic Statistics

		1990	1999	2009
Number of Rotary Clubs	D-1920	36	47	61
	CZ/SK	5	42	64
Number of Rotarians	D-1920	1905	2133	2971
	CZ/SK	169	1026	1417
Number of Rotaract Clubs	D-1920	2	4	6
	CZ/SK	0	4	13
Rotex	D-1920	1	1	1
	CZ/SK	0	1	2

Interact and Inner Wheel Clubs are not cited as they do not exist in CZ/SK.

Mind and Heart

Dr. Dobroslav Zeman (*1930, Jindřichův Hradec), Founding President of RC Plzeň, was elected the first Governor of the new District. He specializes in public relations, is a linguist (speaks five foreign languages) and court interpreter. He has made significant contributions to the development of the turn-of-the-century Czech and Slovak Rotary



Dobroslav and Hana Zeman (center) have been welcome guests at Rotary meetings for the past two decades. They are seen together with Kurt Wild, PDG, RC Linz-Urfahr (left) and Willibald Egger, PDG, RC Linz-Altstadt (right).

Communities by "Mind and Heart" – the motto he chose as the first Governor of District 2240. Dr. Zeman stood at the cradle of Rotary Good News, the magazine which has provided insight on Rotary life since the District's early days. He was chairman of the magazine's editorial board and its editor-in-chief for many years. He was instrumental to the launching of several public projects, taking part in scores of seminars and conferences on various levels, representing his district at three sessions of the RI Council on, Legislation, and on several occasions representing the RI President at the conferences of other districts. In 1993, Zeman was one of the first Czech nationals (third only to President Václav Havel and Vladimír Káš, then the oldest living Czech Rotarian) to become a Paul Harris Fellow on the initiative of Britain's Keyworth-Ruddington Rotary Club (District 1220). In 2004, two sapphires were added to his reward at the initiative of Rotary District 1880 (Germany), this being promoted to three sapphires on the proposal of Rotary District 1950 (Germany) in 2008. Within District 2240 he is also one of the few people to have earned their "Rotary Service Above Self Award", conferred upon him by the RI President, as the highest representative of the Rotary Community on the recommendation of the Board of Directors of RI. Dobroslav Zeman recalls that period:

On 17 November 1990, exactly one year into (Czechoslovakia's) "velvet revolution", the founding members of RC Plzeň, including myself, for the first time met in that city with their new Rotary friends from Austria – Presidents Berthold Hanisch of RC Grieskirchen and Peter Morawek of RC Linz. They had come to Plzeň to explain the true meaning of Rotary, and to teach us to establish a club that would work for the benefit of the public. For many years, the two men lovingly escorted us throughout the ramified Rotarian world. At that time, Austrian Rotary Clubs from District 1920 provided financial support to the newly established Czech and Slovak clubs, such as paying entrance fees to the RI Headquarters in Evanston or contributing to humanitarian projects. A few months later, I found myself receiving from DG 1920 Wolfgang Baschata my charter as the first President of RC Plzeň in the company of Rotarians from twelve countries including the United

States (!) together with not only Berthold and Peter, but also Viktor Straberger, PDG. He was a great man, he had family roots in Czechoslovakia, and he was a Rotarian, body and soul, who tirelessly worked in favor of so many Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs. And when we met to bid farewell to Viktor a few years later, our Austrian friends said, don't cry, Viktor is up there, above us, working to bring forward new Rotary Clubs! Viktor taught us to be sincere.

It was a red letter day for us at RC Plzeň to meet our "our Austrian" governor, once in a year. He would always bring in a lot of new revelations and experience about what we still perceived as the complex and mystical world of the Rotary. We gleaned other priceless experience from the foreign participants of the annual Inter-Country Meetings in Plzeň. We have played host to Rotarians from many European countries, the United States, Australia and even Tasmania. An eighteenth such meeting took place in 2008. We have attended working meetings and visited many beautiful places in Austria, including Gmunden, Salzburg, Innsbruck or indeed also Vienna, but also Bad Gastein, where a session of the D-1920 Board of Governors took place; I was invited to attend in my new capacity of the first governor of our independent international District 2240 for 1999/2000, together with my successor – Ivan Belan of RC Banská Bystrica. We had a unique opportunity to meet again with almost all our predecessors in this demanding post. My journey to a country "down under" was a unique Rotarian travel experience for me: Early in spring 1998, governor Franz-Xaver Otto asked me to lead a four-member Austrian GSE Team dispatched to New Zealand. One year later the governor of the district that is the farthest away from Central Europe, was present to the inauguration of our District 2240 in Prague's Žofín Center.

It was not easy at that time to be the first governor of a brand new district. However, I could always count with the help of all my Austrian predecessors. Moreover, I gained priceless experience at the February 1999 International Assembly of all new governors in Anaheim, California. It was imperative to convey all the new information to my colleagues in the district headquarters, and to the presidents and members of all clubs. Methodological materials were scarce, available only in the official RI languages, most often in English and German. This meant translating, translating, and then translating some more! I was lucky to be a linguist. Also, it was necessary to disseminate more information about Rotary among the broader public that for several decades had had no chance to hear about the organization. To meet these needs, we started publishing, in 1999, a bimonthly district magazine in a combination of the Czech and Slovak languages which, because of its good standards, was certified in 2003 as one of RI's thirty official regional periodicals, and in 2008 it received a T.J. Baťa Award from the hands of the district governor. It was an honor for me to serve as its editor-in-chief for seven years. When Carlo Ravizza assumed the post of RI President, the endeavor was launched to change Rotary into a modern community, reflecting the lifestyle of the third millennium.

Advisors to the Governor

With the inauguration of Rotary District 2240, a body of more than 50 advisors to the Governor assumed its responsibilities, being composed of the representatives of Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs that have previously gathered sufficient experience working in the District 1920

committees, PETS seminars or in their clubs over time. Ivan Belan from RC Banská Bystrica was put forward as District Governor for the next term. Having been elected he assumed his office in 2000/2001. The Board of Advisors was structured using the experience of Austrian Rotarians adjusted to the needs of the Czech and Slovak environment. In practical terms, each active stream of activities was assigned its coordinators. Thus far D-2240 has failed to form a durable Interact Club or Inner Wheel Club, although mixed Rotary Clubs existed even before the formation of the district. In addition to the Austrian Rotary Districts 1910 and 1920, official partnership was established in the first year of D-2240 activity also with D-5160 (California, U.S.A.), and a representative was appointed to a cooperation committee within the framework of EEMA and RIBI (Milan Roch, RC Praha / since 2006 Augustin Čermák, RC Hradec Králové).

Inter-Country Committees

Simultaneously, the action was taken by the Inter Country Committees for cooperation with the districts that had the most Rotary Clubs partnering with D-2240. ICCs were established with Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and of course also Austria. Otakar Veselý from RC Český Krumlov and Miroslav Vodňanský from RC Nitra began to work in the Austria Inter-Country Committee as coordinators for Czech and Slovak clubs respectively. From Rotary 2005/2006, when Otakar Veselý was District Governor, the two's endeavors were enhanced by the involvement of Martin Saitl from RC Třebíč. Their counterparts on behalf of the two Austrian districts were Rudolf Buchmeiser, PDG, of RC Rohrbach, later succeeded by Harald Marschner from RC Enns (D-1920). This International Inter-Country Committee embraced "Rotary without Borders" as its permanent motto.



One of the ICC meetings was held in 2007 in Telč. Its participants were (from the left): Kurt Deutsch, RC Wien-Gloriette / František Ryneš, RC Třebíč / Miroslav Vodňanský, RC Nitra / Otakar Veselý, RC Český Krumlov / Karl Peterliik, RC Wien / Harald Marschner, RC Enns / Martin Saitl, RC Třebíč.

Regular Meeting Venues

Before long, the Inter-Country Committee on cooperation between D-2240 (Czech and Slovak Republics) and Austria's Districts 1910 and 1920 met at their first major joint event, in September 1999. Symbolically enough, their rendezvous took place on the summit of Šumava's Mt. Třístoličník (Dreisesselberg, 4,400 ft above sea level), where there meet three historical borders – Czech (Bohemia), Austrian (Upper Austria) and German (Bavaria). For over 200 years, and maybe longer, this place has been a symbol of internationalism. The summit rewards the visitor with a magnificent panoramic view of almost all of the three regions. The popular Rotarian "climbs" have been a regular



The meetings on Mount Třístoličník (Dreisesselberg) take place in a charming mountain hotel. But only the able-bodied hikers usually make it to the summit where the borders of all three countries meet.

event since 1999, attended also by many friends from Germany's Districts 1880, 1840 and 1950.

The Český Krumlov Tennis Center has been another meeting place favored by Rotarians from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria and other countries since 2000. On a particular June weekend every year, about 30 Rotarians meet to test their skills at the prestigious Rotary Inter Country Cup. Proceeds from the registration fees supported by sponsor donations go each year to one of RC Český Krumlov's many humanitarian projects. Most of the guests Rotarians use the opportunity for sightseeing in the breathtakingly beautiful town that figures on the UNESCO List of World Cultural Heritage and for visiting the noted Five Petal Rose Festival.



Senator Tomáš Jirsa, Mayor of Hluboká nad Vltavou is one of the prominent regular players at the Český Krumlov Tennis Tournament.

Members of the Inter Country Committee on Rotary Cooperation between clubs in Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic hold their working meetings also during miscellaneous events organized by Rotary Clubs. The committee also meets every spring, each time at a different venue and on a different occasion.

Conference on Czech EU Entry

Every March from 1999 to 2003, RC Prague held international economic conferences on the Czech Republic's planned entry into the European Union. All five conferences were accompanied by Rotary Balls. The third conference in succession was a joint venture with RC Ostrava, and the fifth conference was the collective endeavor of five Prague Rotary Clubs. The conferences were open not only for District 2240 Rotarians (their topic was interesting also for Slovak Rotarians) but also to selected university students. They had high professional standards

and each of them centered on a specific theme of the accession talks between the Czech Republic and EU officials. All conferences opened with a speech by the Czech chief EU entry negotiator who briefed those present about the progress of the accession talks and the main issues emerging in the given year. Four conferences were thus addressed by Pavel Telička and the fifth and last one by his successor Jan Kohout. Two conferences heard the then Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Vladimír Špidla, dispel Western fears of unchecked flow of Czech labor to the neighboring countries after the signing of the treaty. In addition to the invited diplomats, all conferences were attended by the European Commission Ambassador Ramiro Cibrian who pointed out the soft spots of the Czech Republic in the accession talks. The business aspects of the EU entry were highlighted by prominent industrialists including Škoda Auto's General Director Vladimír Kulhánek, Czech Telecom's Přemysl Klíma, Director of the Siemens Industry Divisions Jürgen Schmidt, and many other prominent business leaders. Also discussed were legal and financial matters addressed by senior banking officials and lawyers. By virtue of their high professional standard and the active involvement of leading figures, the Prague Rotarian economic conferences duly highlighted Rotary in the political and business environment and helped enhance public awareness of the Rotary activities. The proceeds of each conference and representative ball went in support of welfare programs. On May 1, 2004, the two Rotary District 2240 Countries – the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic – became fully fledged Member States of the European Union. This was the outcome of an almost decade-long process supported by most Rotarians.

European Intercity Presidential Conference Dinners

On 27 September 2001, District 2240 hosted in Prague a large delegation of RI World Headquarters officials. Their visit was part of the "2001 European Intercity Presidential Conference Dinners" arranged by RI's President Richard D. King. Being commenced in Prague, the Conference subsequently moved on into Bucharest, Budapest and Warsaw. Its message was that the Rotarians in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and all over Central Europe managed to restore the forcibly interrupted Rotary tradition in the 1990s. During a meeting with a Rotary delegation, Prague's Lord Mayor Jan Kasl stressed the exceptional significance of the Conference. There were present or past governors of American, Asian and European districts among the delegates. Plzeň-born Milan Rapp came all the way from faraway Australia. Interestingly, two American delegates proudly claimed their Czech ancestry: Bob Coultas's wife pledged allegiance to Kutná Hora and Mark Maloney to Pocínovice in the Chodsko Region (even though he was charmingly in distress when asked to say the word). The Rotary Meeting was held in a ceremonial but friendly spirit in Prague's Marriott Hotel, with 200 delegates attending. The host party's guests of honour were two Czech Senators – Vice Chairwoman Jaroslava Moserová, President of UNESCO General Conference and member of RC Pardubice, and Senator Vladislav Malát, Honorary Member of RC Poděbrady, with spouse. At this evening, RI President Richard King awarded 24 Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs and 20 individuals for the fulfilment of Rotary ideals and support for the Rotary Foundation. Among the awarded subjects were three Rotarians from abroad – the former Governors of Districts, 1920, 1950 and 1880. The Conference put a symbolic end to the period of renewal and stabilization of the Rotary Community in Central Europe and confirmed the strong status of the Rotary Clubs of this Region.

The Rotary Centennial



The Rotary International Centennial in 2005 was not only the year's most important social occasion for the whole international community but also an opportunity for reviving contacts and introducing new forms of cooperation among the Czech, Slovak and Austrian Rotarians. At the June 2003 RI World Convention in Brisbane, Australia, five twelve-inch and ten-pound bells set out on their historic two-year journey to celebrate the Rotary Centennial. Appropriately enough, they were called the Rotary Centennial Bells. Emulating the example of the



The travelling Centennial Bell was a symbol of the

Olympic Flame, they symbolized the international dimension of Rotary. One bell visited the Czech Republic and Slovakia from 22 November to 16 December 2004. RC Praha and two other Prague Clubs gave this bell a grand reception as the city hosted the exhibition "Prague-Vienna, Two European Cities in the Course of Centuries". The bell subsequently endured a marathon of public fundraising concerts, social get-togethers, discussion evenings and

humanitarian projects in another 17 Czech and Slovak towns and cities. The bell left District 2240 after a gala evening in Bratislava. It was headed for Vienna and District 1910.

In March 2005, the RI Centennial and the 80th anniversary of founding Czechoslovakia's first Rotary Club were the keynotes of a District 2240 International Conference held in Prague on 4-6 March 2005 and attended by almost 400 guests including nearly eighty participants from abroad. Greetings were personally delivered to the Prague Congress



The conference brought together (from the left) Otakar Veselý, DGE; businessman Tomáš Baťa; and Acting Governor of D-2240 Viktor Prikazský.

Center by special celebrities – Chairman of the Czech Senate Přemysl Sobotka, Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan, and RI Headquarters Delegate Rudolf Hörndler, PRID, from Germany, who talked about the Rotary's difficult situation in Central Europe. The participants were delighted to receive a written message from the former Czech President Václav Havel. Greetings from the Austrian Rotarians, who helped revive the Rotary Community in Czechoslovakia after 1989, were delivered by Thomas Watzenböck, PDG 1920. The conference was deeply impressed by the personal appearance of the Rotary dean and world-famous industrialist Tomáš Baťa, who was 91 years old at that time, for who else had that much

experience! There were twenty delegates at the conference whose family traditions are connected with Rotary.

Our friends from District 1920 organized a similar event in March 2005 – "The Rotarian Portrait of Upper Austria". Eight hundred guests assembled in the Brucknerhaus Concert Hall in Linz to hear speeches by the Governor of the District District Governor Alfred Fischer, the Mayor of Linz Franz Dobusch and the First Chairwoman of the Upper Austrian Parliament Angela Orthner. Dobroslav Zeman, PDG 2240, on this occasion praised the unselfish assistance of Austrian Rotarians with establishing Rotary Clubs in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

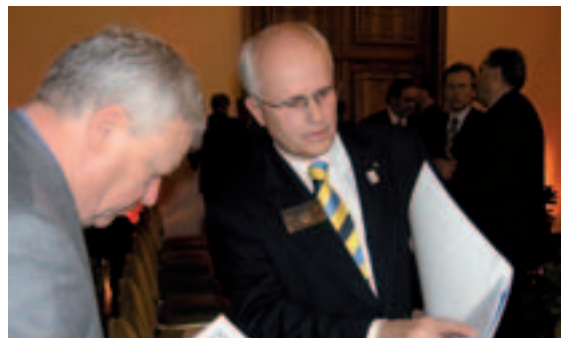
The will of all Rotarians for mutual understanding and a peaceful future for their nations and people all over the world was amply expressed, at the end of the Rotary Year 2004/2005, by planting five memorial trees and unveiling a memorial stone at the entrance of the Lidice Memorial near Prague. The razing of Lidice in 1942 was one the worst



human tragedies of the Second World War. Significantly, the solemn act was jointly initiated by Otakar Veselý and Andreas Waggershauser, the governors of two neighbouring districts – D-2240 (ČR and SR), and Germany's District 1880.

Austria as Seen by its Neighbors

The conference "Austria as Seen by its Neighbors" was an important milestone on the joint road taken by Districts 1920 and 2240. On 10 November 2005, the Grand Knights Hall of the Steyregg Chateau not far from Linz played host to a meeting of almost 500 Rotarians and their families and friends from Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Emceed by Austria's well-known TV anchor, Jetschgo, the conference opened with an address by the popular TV political commentator, Mrs. Coudenhove-Kalergi. The theme of neighboring relations in general was taken up by historian Václav Bůžek, the rector of the South Bohemian University in České Budějovice, and Jiří Lobkowicz, president of Maltese Help in Prague. Then-governors Harald



The conference idea was initiated by Herald Marschner, then Acting Governor of D-1920.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS FROM ROTARY GOOD NEWS

RGN - Every spring since 2003, RC Třebíč has organized fundraising concerts under the keynote "Kids to Kids". Every concert features a performance by students of the Fórum Primary Art School of Třebíč and the P.J. Vejvanovský Conservatory of Music in Kroměříž, but there are always also guest performers from abroad. Led by Frank Spekhorst, a Dutch resident of Třebíč, they always treat their audiences to perfect artistic and human sensations. The proceeds always go towards the purchase of equipment of the children's and infant wards of the Třebíč Hospital. The project enjoys long-term support from German and Dutch Rotary Clubs. ICC CZ/SK-A has now become a partner of the project.

RGN - During RI President William Boyd's visit in autumn 2005, the Slovak capital Bratislava was one of the venues of discussions by representatives of Austria's District 1910 concerning the creation of another new Rotary District for Hungary. District 1911 was established on 1 July 2007.

RGN - Early in June 2005, the ICC CZ/SK-A organized a Youth Sailing Week Adria 2005. Its participants sailed under the expert guidance of Captains Horst Mayrhofer (RC Steyr), Horst Fickel (RC Feldbach) and Herbert Neumüller (RC Linz-South). The crews of three yachts were made up by young people from Austria (9), Czech Republic (9) and three different localities in Slovakia. Kateřina Dědková, a student from Český Krumlov told RGN after her return from Croatia: "It was my first sailing. We were three crews differing by the color of our t-shirts and hats – red, blue and yellow. On board every ship was an Austrian captain, his lieutenant and crew (two Austrians, three Czechs and one Slovak). We spoke mainly in English. But some Czechs' German was better, and they used it."

RGN - In 2005-2007, members of Rotary Club Znojmo pooled resources with their friends in partner RCs Geras/Waldviertel (Austria), Eichstätt Altmühltal (Germany) and Olten-West (Switzerland) to use a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant in order to procure a new bus for a social care institution in the nearby town of Břežany. The project was based on the proceeds from an annual fundraising ball organized by RC Znojmo in the beautiful historical ambience of the city's Louka Monastery. The total value of the project was about 65,000 euros. The specially adapted new bus has been plying Czech and European roads since mid-2007, making life easier and more rewarding for several dozen

seniors and handicapped people from the Znojmo area.

RGN - At the end of March 2007, RC Lungau (D-1920) organized a first annual "Week on the Snow" in Mauterndorf, Austria, inviting also young people from the Czech Republic and Slovakia through its youth service committee. Among them was a girl from Mexico, participating in a student exchange program hosted by RC Klatovy in the Czech Republic. It was her first encounter with snow usable for skiing. Sport, music and other activities which do not require considerable language skills helped to relax initial tensions. A week spent together proved that breaking not only language barriers, and creating conditions for mutual understanding among the young people of the world, are one of the priority tasks of the Rotary Clubs. A second annual "Week on the Snow" prepared in the middle of March 2008 our Austrian friends from RC Zell am See (D-1920).

RGN - Under the patronage of the Czech-Slovak-Austrian ICC, members of Slovakia's RC Nitra spent two days in June 2007 as the guests of their friends from Austria's RC Krems. The Wachau region surrounding Krems is noted for its scenic blend of characteristic rock slopes overlooking the river Danube and numerous historical monuments. Wachau is on the UNESCO list of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The English king Richard the Lionheart was kept prisoner at Dürnstein Castle. But the region is also a culinary haven and the wines made there enjoy great international reputation. Both clubs crowned their meeting by a dinner attended also by representatives of all three districts in the Czech-Slovak-Austrian ICC.

RGN - In summer 2007, members of RC Uherský Brod were invited for a visit to Eferding (Austria, D-1920) to establish cooperation with the local Rotary Club. They presented their hosts with a Jan Amos Komenský-Comenius memorial medal.

RGN - Sixty-four friends from 20 clubs of four districts spent a weekend in mid-October 2007 in the Lednice-Valtice Area, a UNESCO-protected World Cultural Heritage. They visited the Valtice and Lednice chateaux, admiring the latter's newly accessible floor with princely suites and unique hothouse with a collection of tropical and subtropical plants. Saturday's evening at the La Veneria Chateau was spent savouring delicious food, listening to a traditional dulcimer band, and making new

friendships. Our Austrian friends were pleasantly surprised by the relaxed atmosphere of the event. A member of the hosting RC Valtice-Břeclav told us many visitors from abroad had not known what to expect from a trip to a former Eastern Bloc country. The organizers of the successful weekend received many grateful e-mail messages. In October next year, a regular meeting of Rotary neighbours will be held in the ancient bishopric city of Žilina, in Slovakia.

RGN - Similar as in the previous years, the November 2007 social meeting of RC Brno over a dinner of venison specialties was attended by friends not only from the District 2240 clubs but also by guests from abroad. Many of them came from Austria's RC Weinviertel-Marchfeld. The guests relished game specialties prepared by the chef of the Hotel International, and listened to hunting chants and signals, as well as hunting poems in the rendition of actor Zdeněk Dvořák from the Mahen Theater. The net proceeds of about 10,000 euros were donated to RC Brno's Foundation, to pay the costs of a summerholiday camp for handicapped children and contributions to Brno's Klokánek Fund for Children at Risk, or the Betlém Center at Klobouky, which provides round-the-clock assistance care to immobile patients.

RGN - The working seminar on the activities of the Rotary Foundation, held late in 2007 in Kroměříž, was an example of interaction between present-day Czech and Slovak Rotarians and the people who helped establish their clubs in the 1990s. Officials of all the District 2240 clubs involved in organizing Rotary Foundation-supported projects had an opportunity to discuss their plans, learn how to properly file requests for financial contributions, and how to properly implement, document, evaluate and account projects. The seminar focused also on the general principles and rules of the Foundation that supports Rotary activities in all walks of life. Questions were taken also by a prominent guest, Dr. Thomas Watzeböck from RC Kirchdorf, the Rotary Foundation's regional coordinator for Zone 14, who was D-1920 governor in 1998/99 and consequently stood at the cradle of District 2240.

RGN - Rotary Club Žilina, Austria's RC Bruck-Neusiedler and The Rotary Foundation joined forces in the Rotary year of 2007/2008 to assist the Private Special School for Autist Children in Žilina-Bánová. Through a Matching Grant they raised about 20,000 euros to finance replacement windows for the school building.



Madame Coudenhove-Kalergi, together with Professor Václav Bůžek and Jiří Lobkowicz were the main actors at the conference.

Marschner and Otakar Veselý cited many examples of civic interaction within the region. One day later, the Oberösterreichische Nachrichten daily carried a six-page special highlighting the importance of the conference for keeping alive common traditions and fostering mutual cooperation.

Be a Friend

Peter Krön (*1928, RI member since 1963) of RC Salzburg, Austria has left indelible marks on the history of Czech and Slovak Rotary Clubs. He was Governor of D-1920 when the RI community accepted clubs from Český Krumlov, Přerov, Třebíč, Pardubice and Prostějov, and new clubs were established in Nitra and Jidřichův Hradec. Among other projects, he organized, in conjunction with Karel Cidlinský from RC Brno, seminars on Rotary in Jindřichův Hradec and Luhačovice, and a major meeting of Rotary followers in Nové Město. Peter Gut, Governor of Switzerland's District 2000 funded and prepared for free dissemination the translations of background materials for this meeting. In 1997 Peter Krön worked with Ann Fleming from the RI Headquarters and Mila Myrsep from the RI Office in Zurich to prepare RI President Luis Vicente Giay's conference in Prague. On this occasion, RI General Secretary Geoffrey S. Large paid his first visit to Prague to learn more about new or newly discovered Rotary regions in Central and Eastern Europe. During the inauguration of D-2240 Peter Krön together with Milan Roch of RC Praha organized the presence of RI's President for 1999/2000, Carlo Ravizza and his wife Rosanna, as well as their visit to Bratislava. Peter Krön stayed in touch with Czech and Slovak Rotarians even after the establishment of D-2240. 2002 together with the following RI President Carl Wilhelm Stenhammar he was preparing four Presidential Conferences for President Richard D. King in Bucharest, Budapest, Warsaw and



A picture from June 2007 shows Peter Krön (left) accompanied by D-2240 Governor Roman Gronský (centre) and his successor Petr J. Pajas at the RI World Convention in Salt Lake City.

Prague. In November 2002 he organized a successful Rotary Institute in Salzburg for Zones 10-16, attended by eight hundred participants including Czech and Slovak Rotarians. In 2001-2003 he was one of RI's directors, he anchored the 2005 International Assembly in Anaheim. 2006 Peter Krön initiated Presidential Visits and accompanied President Bill Boyd and his wife Lorna to Vilnius, Lithuania, Kraków, Poland and Bratislava. And during 2008 he supervised preparations for RI President Dong Kurn Lee's conference in Vienna.

Český Krumlov Hosts its Second District Conference

In 2006, Český Krumlov hosted for the second time a Rotary District Conference. It was not just a District 1920 conference as in 1996, but indeed a seventh conference of a fully stabilized new District 2240. It surpassed all the previous district conferences by the number of participants (530) as well as in terms of accompanying program and side events. Its proceedings and guest speeches reflected the



Visit to the famous baroque theater at Chateau Český Krumlov was one of the highlights of the side program of the conference.

whole previous Rotarian year, marked by an unusually high number of activities, important by scope and content. Let us recall e.g. the visits of two RI presidents to Prague, the planting of a memorial stone in association with the district project of renewal of a forest destroyed by wind storm in the High Tatras, the release of publication on the history of Rotary in Czechoslovakia, or the release of a CD of unique Mozart compositions a member of the Rotary movement



discovered in the Český Krumlov Chateau archive. An agreement on cooperation between Rotary District 2240 and Junák – the Boy and Girl Scout Center in the Czech Republic was officially signed at the conference in Český Krumlov. In another first, almost all clubs presented their projects in a comprehensive manner in the conference rooms. It was evident that more clubs shared in organizing the event. The Český Krumlov Rotarians were assisted by their friends from RC České Budějovice and RC Hluboká nad Vltavou – Golf. The town of Český Krumlov, a pearl in the crown of Czech tourism, included in the UNESCO Heritage List, and noted for its rich cultural resources (including the sponsorship of several art ensembles), provided ample, comfortable facilities to the organizers and participants of the conference. Among the most prominent foreign guests were John Germ, Past President of Rotary International, whom RI President C.W. Stenhammar appointed his representative at the conference, and U.S. Ambassador William J. Cabaniss. A large group of Austrian Rotarians was also present. The Mayor of Český Krumlov, František Mikeš greeted the conference on behalf of the host city. The ranks of honorary guests were later joined by Senator Tomáš Jirsa and South Bohemian Governor Jan Zahradník. Those who could not be there sent letters of greetings to the conference – Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan was attending a Latin American summit conference, Karel Schwarzenberg was at a congress in Moscow, and Tomáš Baťa was on a business trip to Africa.



The District Governor Otakar Veselý (right) greeted prominent guests of honor, including RI's former Vice President John Germ (center), and U.S. Ambassador William J. Cabaniss.

Professor Nikolaus Lobkowicz lectured on the theme "Europe through the eyes of a Rotarian". In addition to 28 PHF awards, two highest RI distinctions were presented – a Rotary International Service Above Self Award went to Augustin Čermák of RC Hradec Králové, and a Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service was conferred upon Daniela Vondrová from RC Český Krumlov. For the first time, the District 2240 Governor presented the T.J. Baťa Meritorious Award for major contributions to the district, as an official RI award. Since the award was presented for the first time, Governor Otakar Veselý took into consideration also meritorious activities in the previous years. Altogether, 51 awards were made. The chief awardees among non-Rotarians were Václav Havel and Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan, or newspaper publishers Vltava-Labe-Press and MF Dnes for their coverage of regional Rotary activities. Some awards found their recipients in other districts. TJB awards went to District 1920 Past Governors Rudolf Buchmeiser of RC Rohrbach and Thomas Watzenböck of RC Kirchdorf, Rotary Club Bad Ischl, and Adolf Steindl from RC Linz-Urfahr. In District 1910 the award went to Franz Schmidt of RC Weinviertel-Marchfeld. All this was in appreciation of many years of cooperation with Austrian Rotarians.



Otakar Veselý, a member of RC Český Krumlov, for many years the chairman of the Czech ICC Section for cooperation with Austrian Rotary Clubs, and Governor of District 2240 in 2005/2006 confides:

I and my friends fondly remember the mid-1990s when we were establishing a Rotary Club in Český Krumlov. It took us three years to complete the task. It is difficult to convey the atmosphere of enthusiasm, but also all the mistakes, indecision and often also stagnation and unstable membership. Our friends patiently explained to us what must be done and in what way, and how to navigate the sea of Rotary activities and use it for the good of our community. They also provided generous financial support in the initial stages. All of a sudden, the world opened for us, our confidence began to grow, and we found ourselves celebrating our first successful projects – supporting a kindergarten, upgrading a traffic school playground, providing compensation aids to a hospital, and our first major project, implemented with the support of our sponsors from Austria's RC Gmunden and RC Rohrbach and later also our new friends in Germany. A Rotary Foundation Matching Grant helped us procure a specially adapted minibus to provide daily transportation of handicapped children to school and the Rehabilitation Ward of the ARPIDA Children's Center in České Budějovice. Český Krumlov is only a stone's throw away from the Austrian border and that made it easier for us to interact with the partner clubs and the leaders of District 1920, in whose boards and commissions worked also Czech and Slovak Rotarians. The members of our club, as well as other Czech and Slovak Rotarians attended the annual seminars, assemblies and conferences of District 1920. They helped to shape our Rotarian life. District 1920 held its annual conference in Český Krumlov, and this had a major impact on both the Rotary environment and the general public. The experience I gained in that period enormously helped me when I became one of the governors of our new District 2240, a few years later. In the process of founding the district I was happy to be a voice in the mixed international committee on cooperation with Austrian Rotarians. We keep the flame burning at our autumn meetings on the top of Šumava's Mt. Trístoličník (Dreisesselberg) that offers a magnificent and highly symbolical vista of Austria, Bavaria and Bohemia, and during the international summer tennis tournament in Český Krumlov, or indeed also at the spring working sessions of the ICC, organized by our friends in the Austrian section of the committee. In 2006 the Governor of District 2240 awarded many Austrian Rotarians with the T.J. Baťa Merit Awards, one of the official RI distinctions awarded in the name of our district. Unfortunately, the clubs within our Czech-Slovak district still do not know how to fully avail themselves of all the offers our Rotarian friends in Austria propose to us every year. The establishing of District 2240 did not cap our cooperation, as it has grown to be more crystalline. Some of the intensive past contacts are gone, but those that have endured have become stronger and profound enough to last. I do believe further such contacts will be made. The future is open.

Three ICCs in Český Krumlov

In September 2007, Český Krumlov played host to so far the most important meeting of international service officers from several districts. A working seminar initiated by



Dobroslav Zeman, PDG and organized by RC Český Krumlov, brought together members of three ICCs for cooperation between D-2240 (ČR/SR) with Austrian, German and Dutch districts. Chief among the nearly sixty participants were the past governors of all cooperating districts. Their meeting went along with an interesting cultural and social program (excursions to chateaux in Hluboká nad Vltavou and Rožmberk, and monasteries at Vyšší Brod and Zlatá Koruna, a nuclear power exhibition at the Temelín power plant, and a concert of the MUSICA BOHEMICA art ensemble). Among our friends escorting district officials at the seminar were two students attending one-year exchange programs in Austria – one from Brazil, and one from India. The

committees met in separate territorial sessions. The plenary session then enabled all participants to exchange their views and experience, and to share ideas and inspiration provided by the various sections.

Rotary without Borders

The purpose of this booklet was to provide a brief outline of the historical development of Rotary relations in the Czech-Slovak-Austrian geographic space and to present a few projects that illustrate a range of joint activities. This account is not and indeed cannot be exhaustive. Hopefully, those who have been omitted will kindly forgive us, for their efforts and achievements also deserve recognition. We were looking for an element – in the long list of events, names and facts – that would logically complete our account, give it some finality, and maybe also provide a happy ending. No matter how much we tried, tested one event against another and explored various variants, we failed to find such an element. The Rotarian relationships in this region have commenced, overlapped and coincided, but there is no end in sight. They are open-ended. Therefore we cannot take the reader to any grand finale and our narrative has no end. As one of the promoters of Czech-Slovak-Austrian relations, Otakar Veselý, PDG stressed in his motto, Rotary is a world without borders in history and time.

ROTARY WITHOUT BORDERS

Tradition of Rotary Relations among Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Published by ICC for D-2240 (Czech and Slovak Republics) and Austrian D-1910 and 1920 on the occasion of RI President Dong Kurn Lee's Conference in Vienna, December 6-9, 2008: "A Tribute to Twenty Years of Rotary Growth in Central and Eastern Europe 1989-2009"

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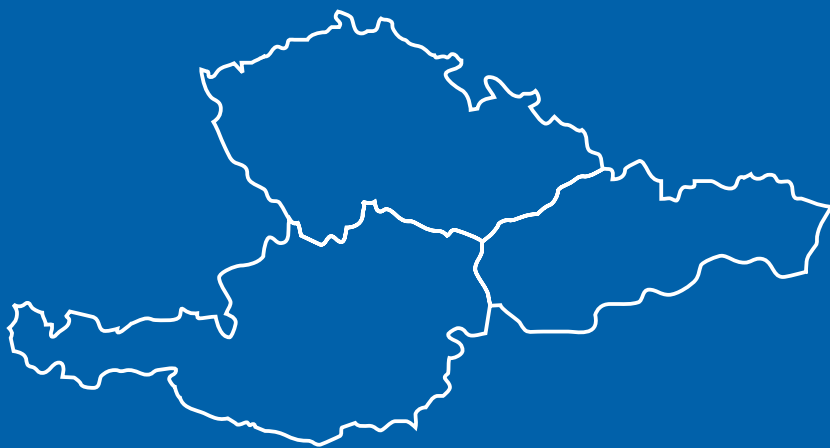
Heinrich Marchetti-Venier (*1947, Vöcklabruck / Upper Austria) resides in Gmunden; studied geography, geology, history and art history in Salzburg and Vienna (Austria), Munich and Bochum (Germany), and Turin (Italy). Since 1972 he has been

working in urban and regional planning in Austria and abroad; he is still private and public consultant on geography and history; he has extensively published scientific papers in Austria and other countries. He has been a member of RC Gmunden (D-1920) since 1994 and held club posts since 1995. He is President Elect for 2010/11, holding District Posts for Francophone Countries and Israel since 1998; is District Report Writer for 1920/1920 since 2001/2005; is managing the D-1920 Archive since 2002, and has cooperated with several Rotary periodicals in the PR sphere.



Svatopluk K. Jedlička (*1954, Prague) lives in Prague. He earned his M. A. in film direction and film and television documentary production at the Prague Academy of Performing Arts. He has been a freelance producer since 1981, and he is the

author of many documentary films and features, in addition to his extensive activities in his capacity of photographer and journalist. In the past few years his focus has shifted to electronic media and public relations. In 1995 he was a founding member of RC Český Krumlov (then part of D-1920), and in 2000 he helped to establish RC Praha Classic (D-2240). As a PP he served as a member of the District Committee for Community Service and District Projects, and from 2005 he served in the editorial board of the Rotary Good News bimonthly, becoming its editor-in-chief and chairman of the District PR Committee in 2007.



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