

## CONCEPT NOTE

### ROTARY & THE SECOND PLUS EUROPE CONFERENCE

#### ***Rotary as an agent for change in European society***

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Leadership of Rotarians is making a difference –large & small- in many cases around the globe. Rotary International is an important organization of professionals and entrepreneurs willing to share their time, network and resources on societal questions.

Within the last few years, and especially during the current economic constraint situation around Europe, some Rotarians have focused their attention on how they can better serve the European society.

Could Rotarians be part of an initiative for better understanding and more cooperation between the peoples of the countries that are forming the EU?

Leadership of Rotarians is needed to address the quest for new vehicles for social change within Europe. Attention should be given – and is given – to the problematic situation within the EU in which groups of people have to cope with economic and social backwardness and sometimes even problems of health and a steady environment to work in, to study, to develop our youth. Certainly it is important to enhance the exchange of ideas on all these matters between Rotarians from these countries.

To deepen mutual understanding and to get a more focused approach, the **Second Plus Europe Conference** is to be held at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels next 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2014.

#### ***What is Plus Europe?***

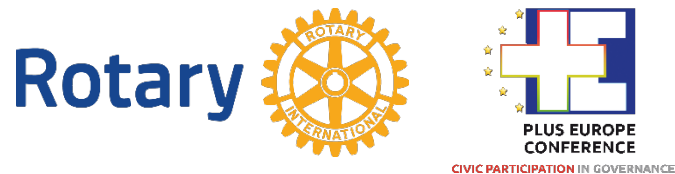
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Plus Europe is a network of committed citizens that works to achieve an agile, fairer and closer European Union by offering a new model of European governance based on mutual respect between the citizen and the different levels of the European government.

#### ***What is the Second Plus Europe Conference?***

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The Plus Europe Conference is an Annual Meeting that takes place every spring. It is jointly organized by Plus Europe, selected European Rotary Clubs and Chambers of Commerce as well as other civic entities.



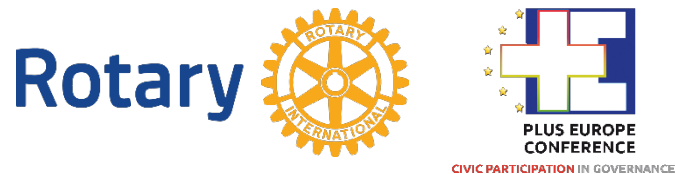
## ***What benefits offers Plus Europe to Rotary?***

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- **Coordination of a European Rotary Agenda**  
Last November 9<sup>th</sup>, the Secretary General of Plus Europe, Ramon Masia, had the privilege to briefly meet with RI President Ron Burton, who acknowledged the need and valued that European Rotary governors and members worked together. Therefore, Plus Europe emerges as a meeting point for European Rotary Governors to meet, discuss and coordinate and develop ideas about how European society should develop and what is Rotary's role in such European agenda.

Such important endeavour will take place during the **Second Plus Europe Conference** in Brussels, on 12<sup>th</sup> May, where a special meeting of European Rotary Governors will be organized.

- **Recommendations to European Institutions**  
One of the outcomes of the Plus Europe Conference is to present the conclusions and action proposals to EU high representatives and policy-makers. Therefore, it is important to count with Rotarians point of view, to be forwarded to European decision-makers, and position Rotary as a key stakeholder in European Governance.
- **Impact in Membership**  
The **Second Plus Europe Conference** is open to participants from all over Europe and the world, Rotarians and non-Rotarians. As a consequence, the high visibility that Rotary is given at the event will offer an excellent opportunity to present the organization and engage potential Rotary members. Such opportunity cannot be undervalued, considering what President Burton expressed on membership and ageing in Monaco.
- **Participation of Youth**  
One of the key issues which is being considered by the Organising Committee of the **Second Plus Europe Conference** is to count with a high youth participation. Certainly, the promotion of Rotary among the youth is a key concern that was highlighted by President Burton in Monaco, and Plus Europe considers it as a strategic issue for its development.  
Therefore, the Plus Europe Conference will promote youth participation by proposing the organization of a RYLA seminar prior the conference in Brussels, and by offering free registration to those RYLA participants at the Conference.



Moreover, Plus Europe will nominate young Rotaracts and Rylas to become Rapporteurs of the main sessions of the **Second Plus Europe Conference**. Such opportunity may be open also to non-Rotarians, thus giving them the chance to know first-hand how Rotary works.

- The Plus Europe Awards  
The awarding ceremony will take place at the Gala Dinner of the **Second Plus Europe Conference**. European Rotary clubs represented at the **Second Plus Europe Conference** will be responsible for awarding one of the three Plus Europe Awards, under the category of *EU Civic Initiative*. This prize will recognize the best civic initiative in Europe, and support the engagement of Rotarians within Europe. As a result, Rotary in Europe will count with a high visibility, which can have a positive effect in membership.

### ***How is the Second Plus Europe Conference organized?***

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The conference focuses mainly on three basic areas:

- European Governance
- European Financial Convergence
- European Social Policies

The goal is to generate debates on several aspects of and approaches to governance models in the European realm and to provide relevant documents in this respect.

#### ***SESSION 1: EU GOVERNANCE***

***'Challenges for Civic Participation in European Democratic Governance'***

Current situation in the EU demands acknowledging and promoting the role of civic participation within the European multilevel framework. Different perspectives will be presented, with a special focus on economic European governance.

#### ***SESSION 2. EU FINANCIAL***

***'Possible models of Retail Banking in Europe'***

The advancement towards the Banking Union is considered a major achievement of the EU. For the future, however, the citizen's perspective, as its service user, is also to be analysed.



### *SESSION 3. EU SOCIAL POLICIES*

‘The standards of a Social Model in Europe’

According to the White Paper on social policy (COM(94) 333), this model is based on ‘the conviction that economic progress and social progress are inseparable: ‘Competitiveness and solidarity have both been taken into account in building a successful Europe for the future.’ Guest speakers will discuss where we are now and what the next steps are.

### *SESSION 4. PENSIONS. PART I: CASE STUDIES*

‘Common ground for the different pension funds in Europe’

What are the challenges that pension funds in the different national systems within the EU are facing? High quality insights will be shared with the participants on an issue that affects millions of citizens.

### *SESSION 4. PENSIONS. PART II: EXPERT PANNEL*

‘What is the state of pensions reform in Europe?’

Experts on the issue will discuss it, with a special focus on converging and diverging trends.