Servas international

NEWS BULLETIN

FROM THE SERVAS INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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OVER 11,000 PROFILES IN SERVASONLINE

In April 2019 there were 11 260 profiles in the ServasOnline System, which is now the main global Servas International (SI) membership administration system. This means that a majority of all individual members of Servas worldwide now have their member data in ServasOnline.

Norway, Israel and China are the Servas countries that have most recently fully transferred to ServasOnline.

There are ongoing activities to integrate Servas Germany, Italy, United States and the rest of the non-integrated Servas countries as soon as possible.

When the membership of the three Servas countries of Germany, Italy, and USA has been uploaded in the member administration system ServasOnline, 95 per cent of our organisation's community will be in the members' database.

Servas France was the first member country that successfully transferred their members' data on July 24, 2016. No Servas country has addressed a formal refusal to join ServasOnline.

A list of Servas countries that have successfully transferred their members' personal data:

France (2 324), Canada (807), Britain (801), Spain (737), Australia (724), Belgium and Luxemburg (401), Denmark (378), Sweden (363), Argentina (304), New Zealand (298), Switzerland (278), Netherlands (273), Austria (245), Turkey (220), Japan (218), South Korea (184), India (174), Israel (167), Hungary (138), Brazil (154), Norway (118), Czech Republic (133), Taiwan (126).

Other countries integrated with ServasOnline or where there is ongoing activity to integrate the countries as soon as possible:

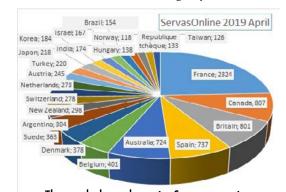
Iran, Singapore, Vietnam, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Slovakia, Cuba, Cambodia, Gambia, Chile, Finland, Belarus, Tanzania, Rwanda, Cameroon, Mali, Congo, Paraguay, Kenya, Uganda, Ireland, Greece, Egypt, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Uzbekistan, Uruguay, Ukraine,

Thailand, Russia, Portugal, Panama, Mexico, Malaysia, Latvia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Georgia, Botswana, Croatia, Hong Kong, Malawi, Nepal, Poland, Suriname and Bangladesh.

SI Exco and the ServasOnline Team invite all remaining Servas countries to join in, so that all national entities will be listed in the ServasOnline System by December 31, 2019.

The ServasOnline Team is available to help the move to ServasOnline and to participating in this major development necessary for maintaining and developing Servas. Send your questions to the ServasOnline Team. Email to servasonline@servas.org.

Note that the user help has been updated and a day host only role created.



The graph shows the major Servas countries with integration to ServasOnline, the global member administration and communication system, in April 2019. *Graph: Bernard Andrieu*

The ServasOnline Coordinators User Group (SOLNCU) also helps Servas countries make the transition to the Servas International member administration system ServasOnline.

Jonny Sågänger, SI President Joseph Lestang, Servas France on behalf of the ServasOnline Team Bernard Andrieu, Servas France & former ServasOnline Application Manager

SI EXCO PRIORITIES FOR 2019–2021

As reported previously in this newsletter (SINB 4-2018) a new global board for Servas International was elected at the SI General Assembly (SI GA) in October 2018.

The new SI Executive Committee (SI Exco) has decided to focus on these priorities:

- SI GA 2018 decisions. SI Exco's main task is to mobilise the resources needed to implement decisions made by SI GA, the highest decision-making body of Servas International.
- SICOGA 2021: SI Exco is looking for Servas volunteers in member countries that have the willingness and capacity to arrange the next Servas International Conference and General Assembly, SICOGA, which is planned for 2021.
- ServasOnline System, SOLSYS. SI Exco will promote acceptance and introduction of the host search and traveler verification, communications and membership administration solution ServasOnline in all member groups/countries.
- SI Registration. SI needs to get a formal registration to be recognised as an international non-governmental organisation (iNGO) both to external players and internally in SI. SI needs to be able to prove that it exists. SI Exco will make a decisive effort to finalise the continuing work to register SI.
- Growth: Servas International should grow both in number of members and income in order to execute the organisation's vision and mission. As many people as possible should be able to enjoy the Servas experience. Growth is also needed since the Servas community now depends on a digital infrastructure that is costly to maintain and develop.

There's been discussion in SI Exco that the development of a long-term vision - a Road Map - should be prioritised. No formal decision has yet been made. However, there's a working group that is working on a number of possible organisational and structural scenarios for SI, based on a motion from Servas Great Britain adopted at SI GA 2018.

Jonny Sågänger, SI President On behalf of SI Exco 2019–2021

SERVAS: LET'S MAKE THE WORLD GREY!

We all know the Servas' vision and mission. But do we realise our purpose is also to colour the world grey? Grey, you might ask. How boring! Please keep reading ...

I claim greying can play a significant role in making the world a more peaceful and friendly place.

We're living in a world in which social media and other means of global electronic and physical communications have grown tremendously over the past couple of decades. This has given people with extreme and violent ideological, religious and political ideas, new tools to advocate their hatred and create division between people. It is happening all over the world, on a global, national and local level.

The extremist's purpose is to tear societies apart and turn them into scattered factions of people who are suspicious and afraid of each other. Their goal is for all religious groups to be afraid of and hate one another. They want citizens to fear the state; they encourage political groups to fight with weapons.

Extremists want to create a society where people with different views remain separated, live behind physical and mental fences, and foster negative illusions about "the other".

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In a sense, this is a society in which what is correct, relevant and right can easily be defined in black and white terms. There is no desire for a society with grey areas, which permits people with different ideologies, religious beliefs, and political ideas to discuss and challenge each other in vibrant and intense discussions.

The extremists want to eliminate these grey zones in order to keep the tension and fear that is fostered by ignorance and mental distance between people.

Servas has an important role to play as an organisation that strives to create more grey areas — saturated with interpersonal and intercultural understanding — by making it possible for people from all over the world to understand more about each other and each other's cultures.

In a world of increasing extremism with calls to build walls, our contribution as an organisation and as individuals is to constantly persist in preventing destructive intolerance. Our mission is to keep opening our homes to strangers, and in doing so, to tear down walls with openness, mutual respect, and understanding.

Life isn't meant to be black and white. There are a million shades of grey.

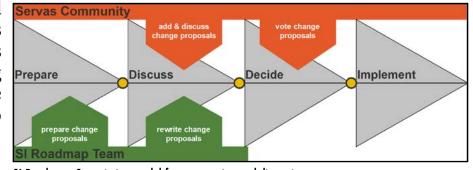
How many can Servas reveal?

Jonny Sågänger, SI President

SERVAS – LESS BUREAUCRATIC AND MORE SUSTAINABLE

Can Servas be "less bureaucratic and more sustainable?" As it celebrates its 70th anniversary, Servas faces vexing challenges and exciting opportunities. If nothing else, the years ahead will be exciting to observe!

The two biggest challenges are a falling revenue stream and the need to maintain a global IT system



SI Road map Commission model for cooperation and discussions.

(ServasOnline). Since 2015, when representatives of many national groups convened in New Zealand for the Servas International Conference and General Assembly (SICOGA), these two topics have prompted discussions by Servas members globally.

In December 2017, Servas Britain proposed a motion for an organisational change in Servas International (SI), and less than a year later, in October 2018:

"The 2018 Servas International General Assembly approves the setting up of a Commission by SI Executive Committee to investigate options for a new global structure that incorporates both Servas International and national member groups."

In 2017, Penny Pattison of Servas Canada and the former SI General Secretary, drafted a paper, Vision for Servas Global, which intended to stimulate informed debate about possible ways to develop and modernise SI and encourage increased member participation in decision-making and other processes. SI President Jonny Sågänger and Michael Silbert, former leader of SI's Information and Communications Technology team,

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further contributed to the paper. It included the following statement:

"Servas International has a long and valuable history... And, the world has come a long way in the past 65 years. It is becoming obvious to many who are active volunteers with Servas that the current model of operation is not sustainable, due to the lack of reliable continuity... therefore, we have the opportunity to consider other ways of operating that may be less bureaucratic and more sustainable..."

This paper resulted in deep discussions among Servas International Executive Committee (SI Exco) members and other key people. Despite much dialogue, there was no final decision until SICOGA 2018, when Servas Britain submitted the above motion asking for organisational change (BRI-002). At this time, Servas Germany also submitted a motion (GER-001) to make the global hosts and travellers' IT tool, ServasOnline, a priority. These and other motions brought further attention to the alarming status of our current situation.

In order to address these motions and our budgetary issues, SI Exco established a SI Roadmap Commission. Servas members who showed interest in this work were asked to join, and I was asked to lead it. The group has much to consider, but it is important to note that the group's mandate is not to make decisions. It is instead to explore the viability of a variety of organisational models to meet the changing needs of Servas. The group's work will evolve over three phases:

In the first step, the group will develop several scenarios for changing the organisational structure of Servas. Throughout this early phase, the commission will consider how changes in the Servas model will require organisation on different levels, such as membership administration, events and activities, and hosting and travelling. Additionally, it will take into account how reorganisation might create a shift in resources and responsibilities. Appropriate tools for collaboration and communication will also be considered. The group will consider pros and cons for each proposal and how each one may affect SI and national groups.

In a second step, feedback about the various scenarios from Servas members will be solicited. As some of the proposals might create substantial change to Servas, it is important that members have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. The goal of this consultation is to prepare a report that includes recommendations from the wider membership.

Finally, in the third phase, the recommendations need to be voted on by the global Servas community. As of today, it is not clear how this will happen. Smaller proposals could be submitted to SI Exco for decisions; more important ones submitted for a SI Distant Vote in 2020, and options that involve changes to the statutes will likely be voted on at the 2021 General Assembly.

The SI Roadmap 2030 team will soon be looking for help from individuals with various skill sets and expertise. If you would like to assist the commission in this work, please contact Chris-Ann Lauria at calauria21@aol.com or Andreas Becker at mts.servas@mail.de.

Reference: BRI-002 Amended Motion: Commission re: Organisational change in Servas. Chris-Ann Lauria, Convener, SI Roadmap Commission

E-LOI PILOT – A GREAT SUCCESS

The pilot to issue E-LOIs has been a great success. We have had very positive feedback from the countries that have been implementing it. As a result, the SI Exco made a decision recently to extend the issue of E-LOIs to all nations that have used 10 stamps or less in previous years. They will no longer issue paper stamps. Instead the ServasOnline team and the treasurer's team will guide these nations to issue E-LOIs. This will vastly increase the number of countries that issue E-LOIs. Since the launch of this initiative a number of nations have already been helped in the last month to issue E-LOIs.

Radha B. Radhakrishna, SI Treasurer

CURRENT SERVASONLINE ACTIVITIES

A team of highly dedicated Servas members are working on ServasOnline, both on continuously improving the system, as well as on assisting member countries with migrating their data.

These are the most recent changes and developments:

Enhancements for members

- Modified the "children field" to make it more useful.
- Added a "Day Host Only" role.
- Finalised changes to the hosting profile, which will allow members to complete the profile without needing a user guide.
- Making the photo easier to upload by allowing larger photos and automatically resizing them.
- Fixed the map feature for mobile devices, so that tapping would open the bubble to view a brief host summary.
- Added a note to profile to advise travellers that LOI is still required for travel.

Enhancements for administration

- Completed several items that will make it easier for large countries to upload their data, including automatic placement on the map and to automatically link members with individual profiles via the "live with" field.
- Added a "delete" function, to allow administrators in each country to fully delete members.
- Adding more items to the "complete profile" field to enable administrators to complete the profile for members unable to do it themselves.

What's ahead?

- After this, only very few changes to ServasOnline are to be expected for a while. This will allow some countries to prepare their import files and move their members' data to ServasOnline.
- During this time, administrative issues, such as rules for data protection, et cetera, will be worked on or necessary changes, such as notification emails.

By Judy Bartel, Servas Canada on behalf of the ServasOnline Team

SERVAS DIGITALLY

Since its founding, Servas has been all about connecting people and communicating. When Bob Luitweiler and other pioneers created Servas, they established a network where people could communicate and meet: they made it possible to get in touch with people who, without Servas, would have been out of reach. Since then, times and technology have moved on and the entire world got connected. Compared to the speed of modern digital communication, the traditional Servas method of communicating is like the movement of a sailing boat compared to a speedboat. The good news is that Servas is picking up speed in the digital world. ServasOnline, the new global platform for hosting and travelling, is gradually replacing printed host lists, and eStamps are replacing printed Letters of Introduction.

This move presents a challenge for Servas: more complex IT systems also require corresponding skills to run and develop them. Despite not being a highly "tech-savvy" community overall, Servas has accepted this challenge which includes running all IT systems entirely with its own resources. This applies to global systems, as well as to most local systems. These systems were designed, developed and are now run by a handful of people. These volunteers deserve our thanks and respect, and I would like to acknowledge them in the name of the entire Servas community.

Beyond technological issues, Servas faces more challenges. Hosting and travelling, which provided Servas with the financial means to exist, is undergoing fundamental changes. In part, this is fuelled by digital technologies. On these grounds, SI Exco launched a project that aims at considering the activities Servas would like to do in the future (see article by C. A. Lauria on page 4).

Changes that might result from this project will again trigger new ideas and requirements that should be managed by Servas ICT tools:

"Can I email to the peace secretaries of all National Groups?" "How can we promote events organised by one National Groups to others?" et cetera.

Presently all these questions would be sent to the few people running the ICT tools. With their limited available time, questions may remain unanswered, requirements may not be met. In addition, the ICT tools increasingly need to function on an international level and go beyond the scope of a single National Group. In an attempt to address these issues, SI Exco recently decided to build a new team called the SI ICT Coordination Team. This team will be tasked with ensuring that Servas global and local solutions work well together and assessing whether consolidating aspects of these two systems could be more effective and efficient. Additionally, for the purpose of improving communication, SI started to use a globally available platform that facilitates collaboration for global teams: Atlassian Confluence is used for creating, reviewing and sharing documents, as well as to support team organisation with meeting minutes, tasks, calendars and much more. And all of this outside the world monitored by Google.

In the face of these changes and opportunities, Servas International is looking for additional people who would like to contribute to moving Servas to the digital age. This includes very technical activities, but also specification or documentation work — or just helping others to get on board. Would you like to help building, running or using Servas ICT and with this contribute to rebuild Servas for the 21st century?

Servas "job ads" will soon be online on servas.org: what about checking to see if your individual skills are particularly wanted?

Please get in touch with exco@servas.org, or, for ICT related help directly with tech-secretary@servas.org!

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SERVAS NEW ZEALAND GRATEFUL FOR AROHA AND SUPPORT

Thank you to all those in the international community who have reached out to us and sent your aroha (love) and support. Your kind words carry great power. If you wish to contact us further about what has happened, please don't hesitate to do so by replying to this email: servasnznatsec@gmail.com Our hearts are with all those whose lives have been so tragically affected. We stand with the people of Christchurch and with the whole Muslim community here in Aotearoa New Zealand. Should you be wondering how to help the victims of the shootings, you may wish to https://thespinoff.co.nz/nyPWmZXetk6m25lOY b7TuxZyyBsV qKSpv3cFnQrRm4iNXxgL5I for more information.

In appreciation.

Thank you.

Derek Carver and Marijke Batenburg, Joint National Secretaries (until April 30, 2019) Servas New Zealand, servasnznatsec@gmail.com

PORTRAIT: CHANGING MEN'S VIEW OF WOMEN AND FAMILY

Servas Rwanda is a pioneer in different fields: activating Servas Africa and preventing violence against women and families

Fidèle Rutayisire, Servas Rwanda's National Secretary, has an unusual job, at least from an African point of view. He works to prevent men committing acts of violence against women and family members. By running

training courses for men, he introduces them to a different view of women and family than the one they are may be used to. The women are also involved. It is an exemplary project and far from standard. Three cheers for this ground-breaking work!

But that isn't enough for Fidèle. He has resolved to spread Servas throughout the whole of Africa, no less. In some countries that means reactivating Servas, in others it means starting from scratch. He also plans to bring the Arabic-speaking world in northern Africa into the Servas fold.

We wish him much luck and success!

Fidèle is also a member of the Development Committee (DC), a Servas International working group with a member on every continent. The DC tries to get Servas started in countries that don't have Servas as yet. Expats (people who live and work outside their home countries) often play an important role in this process, since they usually know Servas from home. With the help of the DC, they try to instill a sense of enthusiasm for Servas among the locals in their new country. Servas International provides help to get started. It's a task that calls for a good deal of patience and perseverance.

Conni Geisendorf, National Secretary, Servas Germany



Fidèle Rutayisire, Servas Rwanda's National Secretary, by the statue Four Bremen Town Musicians, the symbol for the German town of Bremen

Photo: Helga Merkelbach, Servas Germany

NEW SERVAS KEY PEOPLE

SERVAS JAPAN

Actual board members of Servas Japan

- Natonal Secretary: Tomoko Hirai, replacing Tomoko Ogata
- Deputy and Host list Coordinator: Motonobu Takeyama, replacing Shuji Yoshizaki
- Servas Online Administrators: Hideaki Yoshioka and Shinobu Nakazaki (Vice Adm)

SERVAS TAIWAN

Taiwan Servas National Group held a national meeting on March 30, 2019.

These are the members of the new board:

- National Secretary: Mei Wang, re-elected
- General Secretary-Deputy: Yufang Hu, replacing Keith Wu
- Main Contact: Thomas Kuo, replacing Tzuhua Wu
- ServasOnline Administrator: Pamela Yang, replacing Hedy Sung

SERVAS PARAGUAY

Since April 2019 Servas Paraguay has a new board.

- National Secretary: Edgar Adan Mora Almada, replacing Maria Magdalena Barros Ortiz
- Deputy: Maria Magdalena Barros Ortiz, replacing Carmen Zavala de Romanach
- Host List Coordinator: Miriam Amada Mora Allmada

SERVAS SPAIN

General Assembly was held in April 2019, elected members of the board are:

- President: José Gabriel Lopez
- Secretary: Carmen Calzadilla, replacing Sol Font Caldera
- Deputy: Jesus Vinuesa, replacing Jorge Gonzalez
- Peace secretary: Anouk Iraol, replacing Luis Carlos Rodriguez

SERVAS INDIA

Since April 2019 Servas India has a new:

- Deputy Secretary: Ravindra Verma, replacing Mahesh Sharmas
- National Secretary Abhay Shaha and other board members remain the same.

SERVAS NEW ZEALAND

AGM was held on April 30, 2019

National Secretary:

 Peter Debney, replacing the joint National Secretaries Marijke Batenburg and Derek Carver.

Other board members remain the same.

SERVAS CHILE

Since May 2019 Servas Chile has a new:

- Host List Coordinator: Angela Cortez, replacing Inés Olea Sierralta
- National Secretary Aneris Cao and other board members remain the same.

SERVAS SWEDEN

Servas Sweden had a General Assembly in March. Some new board members were elected. The board now consists of the following people: Eva Hartman-Juhlin, Harley Thomas, Manda Björling, Ann-Katrine Roth-



Members of Servas Sweden's board and Nominations Committee, NC. From left to right: Manda Björling, Susanne Göthner, Ingrid Stjerna (NC), Kristina Båth Sågänger, Eva Hartman-Juhlin, Lenka Katila, Holly Xiao, Harley Thomas. *Photo: Cattis Antonsson*

Rudberg, Kristina Båth Sågänger, Holly Xiao, Monica Nilsson, Susanne Göthner, Lenka Katila.

Best wishes to all the new board members and thanks to the key people who left the boards of their National Groups.

Rita Dessauvage, SI Dolphin Team Member of Servas Belgium & Luxemburg

DISTRIBUTING INFORMATON ON EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Recently and happily a large number of events and meetings have been held worldwide, and for each of these events there is a request to inform all our members about them.

This creates quite a load on the person distributing information and mainly on all National Group leaders, expecting them to forward all the information emails to their members. And as a result, a few members feel that they are being flooded with emails as well. Trying to improve the handling of this and ease everyone's load a new procedure has been established.

What happens when a Servas country or group wants to advertise an international event?

- Compose your invitation (text, photos, registration form, information, etc) in Word format and send it to vicepresident@servas.org
- Your event will then be uploaded as soon as possible through a link to the events page: https://servas.org/en/events-meetings
- The Servas Distribution Team will send to all National Secretaries and key people the links for the latest events once a month.

It is very important that the National Groups are willing to inform their members about these international events. We want our members to be well informed, and to see new faces in our meetings. All co-operation in spreading the information from the National Secretaries to individual members is much appreciated.

National Groups are expected to send the monthly letters to all their members. We wish to thank everyone for their help and co-operation, as well as the enormous dedication and commitment of all our volunteers.

Carla Kristensen, SI Vice-President (vicepresident@servas.org)

VISIT SICOGA 2018 WITH YOUR EYES AND EARS!

The Servas International Conference and General Assembly (SICOGA) 2018 was documented by filmmakers Loukas Konstantinidis, Elia Rodrigues and Mar Ferre. You can see the film SICOGA 2018 — the documentary is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=or_wAO4K56Q

The film was made with support from Servas International, Servas Korea and Servas Spain.

SICOGA 2018 was also documented in the podcast Six Nights in Banghwa: Tales of the Seoul International Conference. Through listening to a number of interviews and editorial comments. you can get an insight to what happened during the global Servas Conference in October 2018.

You can listen to the podcast Letter of Introduction Episode 2 on both <u>iTunes</u> and <u>Spotify</u>:

On Servas Australia's website you can listen to all the episodes of the Letter of Introduction podcast at: http://servas.org.au/archives/8789

The podcasts have been produced by Lauren Gordon, the National Secretary of Servas Australia, who is also the editor of the Letter of Introduction podcast.

By Jonny Sågänger, SI President

SERVAS INTERNATIONAL ON THE INTERNET

Servas International website: servas.org/index.php **Servas on Twitter:** twitter:twitter.com/ServasI?lang=en

Servas on Facebook:

Servas Travelling for Peace www.facebook.com/groups/servas/

- This public discussion group is for people who are interested in learning more about Servas International. Membership in a recognized Servas Group is not required. Membership in this Facebook group does not make you a member of Servas.
- Administrators: Alan Stone, Stefan Fagerström, Pablo Colangelo, Jonny Sågänger.
- Moderators: Carla Kristensen, Jae Kwoang Park.

Servas International www.facebook.com/groups/117649068294944/

- This closed discussion group is for people who are members of Servas. Your membership will be verified.
- Administrators: Pablo Colangelo, Arnoud Philippo.

SI Facebook Page www.facebook.com/pg/Servas.International/about/?ref=page internal

• Open to everybody.

SERVAS NEWS BULLETIN AVAILABLE IN SPANISH

You can also read the SI News Bulletin in Spanish on the Servas International website. Join the Servas Translators Team. Email Lilly Kerekes, the coordinator: spanishcoordinator@servas.org

ABOUT SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN

The Servas International News Bulletin (SI News Bulletin) is a newsletter from Servas International Executive Committee (SI Exco), which is the organization's global board. The SI News Bulletin contains a brief report about current issues and decisions.

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Picot Cassidy, Servas Britain
Itzcóatl (Jorge) Rendon, Mexico
Graphic Design/Layout: Alan Stone, Servas Greece

What would you like to read about in the SI News Bulletin? Let us know.

Email: president@servas.org

We encourage Servas key people around the world to forward this bulletin to individual members. Feel free to quote this bulletin but please remember to mention Servas International News Bulletin as the source.

SI EXCO 2018-2021

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ABOUT SERVAS INTERNATIONAL

Servas International is an international, non-profit, non-governmental federation of national Servas groups, supporting an international network of hosts and travellers.

Our network aims to help build world peace, goodwill and understanding by offering opportunities for personal contacts between people of different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities.