Toastmasters International Grows in Continental Europe

Demand for professional communication skills, especially among the younger generation, fuels growth of corporate Toastmasters groups teaching public speaking

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., Oct. 23, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Young professionals across Continental Europe are joining Toastmasters International in record numbers to hone the skills required for career advancement. Perfecting conversational English has always been a key motivator for Europeans to join Toastmasters, but recent growth is primarily attributed to the younger generation joining local clubs to develop the soft skills highly valued among employers.

Toastmasters International was founded in 1924 in Santa Ana, Calif., United States and has seen steady growth since then, with a current membership of 357,000 members in 143 countries, including more than 25,000 European members. The global nonprofit association offers a proven education program whereby members improve communication and leadership skills and build public speaking confidence in a supportive group setting. The skills gained are directly related to success in a global corporate environment.

"All around Europe, our members are going through huge transformations as leaders and individuals," says Morag Mathieson, from Erlangen, Germany, and Toastmasters International Director for Region 11. "While Toastmasters is well known for helping people improve public speaking skills, Europeans see the benefit of joining Toastmasters to develop their communication and leadership skills, which our members are leveraging to boost their professional and personal lives."

The first Toastmasters club in Europe was chartered in 1935 in Southport, England, but it wasn't until 2003 that the first European Toastmasters district was founded. Since then, Toastmasters clubs have grown so rapidly in the continent that earlier this year, two Toastmasters districts became six districts that comprise 27 countries across Continental Europe.

"Most schools in Europe don't offer formal public speaking or leadership training," says Mathieson. "Toastmasters has filled that void among the younger generation of workers who are seeking advancement in their careers."

Highlights of Toastmasters' European growth include:

- Nearly 50 percent more members in Europe than five years ago
- Triple the membership growth compared to the rest of the world
- Three-and-a-half times the club growth of non-European countries
- Expansion into nine new countries over the past nine years

"The growth of our organization in Europe has been remarkable," says Lark Doley, Toastmasters 2018-2019 International President, based in Texas, United States. "In May, we held an unprecedented conference in Athens to celebrate the growth and unity across Europe. Our recent global launch of the Pathways learning experience offers members the most effective communication and leadership resources available."

If you'd like to share stories about Toastmasters' growth in your country with CEO Daniel Rex, email pr@toastmasters.org. For more information, visit www.toastmasters.org.

About Toastmasters International
Toastmasters International is a worldwide nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Headquartered in Englewood, Colo., United States, the organization's membership exceeds 357,000 in more than 16,600 clubs in 143 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow @Toastmasters on Twitter.

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For further information: +1 720-439-5050, pr@toastmasters.org

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