

# SHARING OF IDEAS

ENGLISH

## A Closer Look into WiB's Advisory Board

The consolidation of members from all over the world via various group activities lie at the core of Willkommen in Berlin (WiB). Working closely with WiB's Executive Board are the Advisory Board Members who represent the different regions of the world and help oversee the club's work and developments. Who are these dedicated members? What does WiB mean to them and what does an advisory board's work actually look like? Let's find out!



EUROPE:  
**STEFANIA STEFANELLI  
MATTIOLO**  
*Italy*

“ I arrived in Berlin in November 2018. I was still in Ankara when a German friend suggested to contact WiB. She said that “it is a shortcut to discover the city and meet new friends”, and I absolutely agree. I met lovely people, discovered beautiful places and started speaking German with nice and patient ladies who took time to listen to my Tarzan storytelling. Now I am a member of the Advisory Board, leading the European Group - which I find an easy task. The Board meets three times a year to share what happens in each group and to draw ideas from one another. Being part of WiB was important for me to make Berlin feel like home. My gratitude goes to the great work and the attention that all the German ladies have for all of us.”



AFRICA:  
**JEANNE NDATIRWA**  
*Rwanda*

“ I have been a member of WiB for four years now. The club offers a “smooth landing” to newcomers. Members of WiB from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offer many insights that help spouses of diplomats new to Berlin to feel at home in a relatively short period. The spouses of diplomats and local members of WiB interact through varied activities organized by both WiB and Embassies/Residences; it is through these activities and interactions that both sides are able to gain a true and accurate understanding of each other. This, for me, is the most enriching aspect of being a member of WiB. I represent spouses of African Ambassadors on the Advisory Board. Representation is one of my main roles as the spouse of the Ambassador. The current position is just a continuation of my current role but on a larger scale. WiB will always hold a special place in my heart. Through WiB I have discovered the world. I have met ladies from many places. I have been given many opportunities for personal growth through various trips in Germany and to many other different countries. I have also learned a lot about various countries through cultural events at Embassies or Residences. But most importantly, the friendships I have made are priceless. Big thank you to WiB!”



LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN:  
**MARIA TERESA TOBAR**  
*Ecuador*

“ I have been a member of the Club since March 2018. What interests me most about WiB are the opportunities to discover Berlin, its culture, customs, traditions and to get to know people from all over the world. At present, I see myself with four main responsibilities: being a mother, being the spouse of an Ambassador, being a businesswoman with 102 employees in my country and being a WiB Advisory Board Member. Each of my responsibilities has its own particularities, satisfactions and similarities. Taking 2 of them for instance: as a spouse of an Ambassador, I have to promote my country in Germany, while as a WiB Advisory member I have to promote the Club to the diplomats of my region. I really love my job as a promoter! WiB to me means friendship, happy moments, interesting places and wonderful people!”



ARABIA:  
**REEM AL SHARRAH**  
*Kuwait*

“ I came to Berlin 1.5 years ago. As soon as I arrived, I asked our embassy to register me in WiB. In my previous post in Australia, the diplomatic community shared with me all the positive aspects of joining WiB, like how it would help me to explore the city better or get to know more people - both within the diplomatic community and the German side. It just shows how respectable and reputable this amazing group is. As a WiB Advisory Board member and a representative of the Arab group, I attend meetings every few months to reflect and share ideas, plans and events with other members. This position fits perfectly with my other responsibilities as they complement each other quite well. WiB means a lot to me for various reasons. Firstly, it's a group in which I was able to indulge into a plethora of distinct cultures. Secondly, the experience I gained from learning about these cultures has reflected positively on myself and has given me a new perspective in the way I see things. Lastly, WiB has allowed me to form bonds with numerous people whom I cherish and will keep for the rest of my life.”



ASIA PACIFIC:  
**PAULINE NESDALE**  
*New Zealand*

“ I have been a member of WIB since March 2018. I was attracted to WiB by the opportunity to meet a diversity of German women, to explore Berlin with them and to learn more about Germany, its culture and history. I have only recently joined WiB's Advisory Board and am still coming to grips with the role. At this stage, I see my role as a sounding board for the Executive Committee and as a liaison between the Executive Committee and WiB members from the Asia Pacific Region. WIB is a special part of my life in Berlin, providing opportunities for friendship, fun and learning.”

“WIB IS A SPECIAL PART OF MY LIFE IN BERLIN PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRIENDSHIP, FUN AND LEARNING”



CENTRAL ASIAN, EAST AND SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN NON-EU COUNTRIES:  
**SVITLANA MELNYK**  
*Ukraine*  
REPRESENTING

“ Joining the Club in 2016, I was overwhelmed by the variety of opportunities it offers to newly appointed ambassadors and their spouses to better understand Germany. What I like most is the very open and friendly atmosphere established within WiB allowing us, as a vibrant diplomatic community, to enjoy exploring Berlin and getting to know the German people. Since the beginning of 2020, I have been honored and proud to represent our multifaceted and bright geographic group of Central Asian Countries, Eastern and Southeastern European Non-EU-countries. This new posting perfectly fits my previous duties within our Ladies Club to organize monthly brunches, welcome and farewell parties, other cultural events for our members and sustain the spirit of common understanding and trust. Without any exaggeration, WiB for me has become my second home with marvelous, amazing people whom I admire and respect. It is a truly unique institution of Berlin! So, I highly recommend to each newcomer: do not hesitate to join our diplomatic team!”