

# «We bring trade partners together»

It's not just the WTC in Zurich that is celebrating an important anniversary this year – its umbrella organization in New York, the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA), is also celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To mark the occasion the WTC Journal interviewed Guy F. Tozzoli, President of the WTCA.

**WTC Journal: Mister Tozzoli, can you give our readers a brief outline of the WTCA's goals?**

Guy F. Tozzoli: We promote and support the setting up and successful management of individual World Trade Centers as part of a global alliance. The broader aim of this is to promote international trade, and in doing so to ensure stability, development and economic growth in the participating regions.

**What has the WTCA achieved in the past 35 years?**

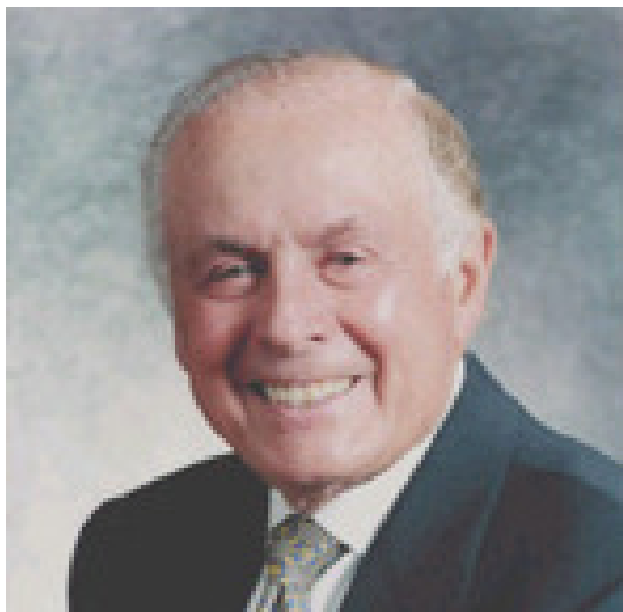
Today there are 284 World Trade Centers in 77 countries helping more than 750'000 participating businesses to make money through international trade. The WTCA brings together trade partners from different cultures around the world.

**The WTCA slogan is: "Peace and stability through trade". Isn't that a little utopian, in a world that is still plagued with war?**

Business relationships mean that cultural exchanges take place between different regions. Trading promotes mutual understanding between cultures with every transaction. Successful interaction between economic systems doesn't allow for any conflict – on the contrary, it relies on peaceful cooperation. That's why for us peace and stability through trade isn't an utopian dream, but an ideal worth striving for.

**What advantages does the WTCA offer for a trader in India or an SMC in Switzerland?**

While all businesses in a region benefit from the economic activities of their nearest WTC, those who stand to gain the most are companies that are already operate internationally, or would like to do so. For example, the trader in India could become more competitive by extending his range of goods



**Guy F. Tozzoli, WTCA President**

to include new products imported by a WTC member. Small business operators in Switzerland can find new markets or distributors through the WTCA, which in turn improves their position in the domestic market.

**Aren't you afraid that the internet might one day take over the services provided by WTCA?**

There are two good reasons why I don't believe that will ever happen. Firstly, there may will be an abundance of trading information on the internet, but this all needs to be filtered and interpreted. Secondly, the anonymous nature of the internet actually increases the importance of personal contacts. Communication via the net is so non-binding that you never really trust your opposite number completely. The WTCs, on the other hand, can help overcome this difficulty by checking the credentials of your potential trade partners.

**With a total of just under 300 members, has the WTCA reached its maximum size?**

No, there is no doubt that the WTCA will continue to grow. Since an ever-increasing number of the world's regions want to become involved in world trade, the World Trade Centers are needed more than ever to provide these businesses with access to new markets.

**Will any new WTC be opened in the near future? And if so, where?**

The WTCA is constantly receiving applications from around the world. We expect our biggest growth to be in China. At the moment there are just 11 World Trade Centers there, but there are over 100 attractive economic centers.

**Where would you personally like to see a new WTC?**

I believe there are many cities and regions in Africa that could benefit from having a World Trade Center.

**How do you monitor quality standards in such a large organization as the WTCA?**

Every WTC is unique, and you can't expect the same standards from each of the 284 WTCs around the world. As well, the WTCA is a common-interest group, not a franchise organization. It doesn't lay down the law for its members, but instead supports and encourages them to achieve first class results. For some time, however, we have been certifying WTCs that stand out for their particularly high standards of quality. At the moment there are 75 certified WTCs, and this number will continue to grow.

**The terror attacks of 11 September 2001 claimed the lives of almost 3000 people and destroyed the World Trade Center in New York, the headquarters and symbolic heart of the WTCA. How has the WTCA recovered from this blow?**

In spite of the shock we were "back in business" after just two days. I received gestures of sympathy and encouragement from every single WTCA member. The solidarity of our members and their commitment to our goals and ideals helped us to hold together and move forward during this difficult time.

**Where is the new WTCA head office, and how many people work there?**

We have moved into new offices on 42nd Street in Manhattan. At the moment 19 WTCA staff work there.

**What is your anniversary wish for the WTCA's next 35 years?**

I hope that all WTCs in the world will work together to achieve the ideal of peace and stability through trade.

**Mister Tozzoli, thank you for this interview.**

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