



International Students' Union of Norway (ISU)

Minutes of the National Assembly in Ås 17-19 October 2008

Prepared by

Solveig Aamodt, Organizational Secretary
ISU National Office

Prepared for

Member Branches

and

Samarbeid Partners

- [Studentenes Landsforbund \(StL\)](#)
- [Norsk Studentunion \(NSU\)](#)
- [Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond \(SAIH\)](#)

FRIDAY 17th OF OCTOBER

The Assembly started at 14:00 hours.

Initial greeting by ISU President, Farshad Tami

Welcoming all to Ås and the first National Assembly of this academic year.
Introducing chairman, Knut Hjellevstad and welcoming guest speaker, Professor Knut Hove

Welcoming speech by Professor Knut Hove, Rector of UMB

He welcomed us all to Ås, giving us an inspiring and interesting lecture on the history of UMB, the vision of the university and some tips on how we can work on making our home institutions more attractive and accessible to international students. Ås is the Norwegian university with the highest percentage of international students, and they have a bilingual policy, meaning that all information is available in English.

Presentation of Partner Organizations

Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH)- Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund

- Presentation by Sigrun Espe, Vice-President of SAIH
SAIH works with development cooperation in 5 countries in Africa and Latin-America. Their emphasis is on higher education and solidarity with students in developing countries. They have local chapters on most higher education institutions in Norway and a national office in Oslo. In Norway they do information work and lobbying towards MoFA.

Studentenes Landsforbund (StL)- Norwegian Association of Students

- Presentation by Ina Tandberg, International Officer
StL represents all students at university colleges. They favour state responsibility and high quality in higher education. Their main goals are equal rights and student democracy. Successful cooperation with NSU and ISU, they invite more international students to join StL.



Norsk Studentunion (NSU)- The National Union of Students in Norway

- Presentation by Marte Sendstad, International Officer.

NSU represents all students at universities and scientific colleges. Their main goal is education for all. As StL they work with lobbying, media and contacts. They are concerned with better health conditions for students. They also work for increasing international exchange in higher education.

ISU National Report by Farshad Tami

Gave a presentation of the national board. Presented what ISU has achieved the last year and outlined the goals for the organization to work on. Especially emphasizing the hopeful success in improving conditions for quota students and the cooperation with StL and NSU on this issue.

Presentation on Gender Issues by Helge Lundsvoll Andersen from NSU

NSU has a quota system to ensure a gender balanced organisation (at least 40% representatives of each sex). Helge gave a presentation on how Norway is not as equal as we like to think. He also said gender roles are created and that there is no reason for why men are overrepresented in higher positions in society. This caused a discussion on gender equality with many different opinions; it was decided to continue the discussion at a different time.

Practical stuff

Candidates for election were encouraged to talk to Farshad during the day if they felt they needed more information about the three positions.

Practicing of voting and debate procedures with Chairman Knut

SATURDAY 18th OF OCTOBER

The Assembly started at 09:30 hours.

National Vice Presidents' reports

Elena Egortseva, 2nd Vice President

She gave a presentation on her work, summing up that what is most important in the job is to be committed and have time for the work alongside with the other tasks and duties you have.

Prashant Søegaard, 1st Vice President

He was not able to participate at the National Assembly, but he sent a video with information about the work he has been a part of and some advice for the new vice presidents. He emphasized the importance of helping each other out and that you can learn very much about yourself working in the ISU National Board.

National Report on Finance, presented by Farshad



Debate on increasing cooperation between Studentsamskipsnaden and international students

- Panel including:
 - Pål Magnus Løken, SiÅs
 - Anna Wergeland, StL HiO
 - Fredrik Refsnes, Student Welfare Council at UiO
 - Maja Stede Aarønæs, NSU Ås
- The four in the panel gave presentations of their organizations. Presentations can be found at http://isu-norway.no/NAII2008/NAII_2008.php
- This was followed by a discussion on how international students can cooperate better with these organizations and tips on how to access the decision makers at our different institutions.
- The discussion started with questions from the participants on the presentations of the panel.

Branch Presentations

ISU Bodø

They have a new board with 6 member and also many volunteers. ISU Bodø works pretty well now with many activities by and for international students. They have coffee hour every week, work together with the students' union and they have also organized international week with many different activities. Will work on including more Norwegian students.

ISU BI Oslo

They would like to host the next NA. Presented BI as a good school with many offers to English speaking students and good projects to include international students.

ISU HiO

They are focusing on further cooperation. Organizing weekly activities; coffee hour, tours in Oslo, movie nights. Has problems with a lack of interest in ISU among international students.

ISU Narvik

They focus on what international students need. Have had great success with a course that helps students to look for a part time job in Norway, they also organize weekly social activities. They see their board as a family, it's important to get to know each other.

ISU NHH

Their main focus is integration, promotion and business. They cooperate with SiB and get money from the school to organize activities. Their concerns are on lack of information in English, integration and turn-over in the board.

ISU Stavanger

Their focus is to build, strengthen and lead. They have had success participating in introduction week and they have had an increased recruitment to ISU. They have organized coffee hours as a meeting ground for international and Norwegian students. They are concerned about the discriminating rules on deposits on student housing.

ISU Telemark

They have changed their name from ISU TISA. Elected new board two weeks ago. They have had success in organizing different activities, among them Chinese courses,



Chinese week, sports, job activities and parties. They would like to include other school campuses of Telemark to the branch.

ISU Tromsø

They showed a video from their office, presenting all ISU Tromsø. They have had many activities this year and have very good cooperation with Millicent from NSU.

ISU Trondheim

They have a board and a social committee. They have organized several events; movies, bar, trips and parties. They have also organized a very successful volunteer Norwegian course in cooperation with Norwegian students.

ISU UiB

They have build up the organization from the ground. They also cooperate with ISU NHH, Bergen Buddy and the Fantoft student coalition to make things better at the student housing.

ISU UiO

Aim to serve the students. Organize different activities; football, parties, tours and a newspaper for international students. It's challenging to work when there are so many students and the turn over in the board is great.

ISU Ås

Aim to bring international and Norwegian students together, they host events for all the students. Challenge to keep up the great interest shown in the beginning.

Group Workshops

All participants were divided in to 6 groups led by a representative from NSU or StL. They discussed successes and challenges from their different experiences with ISU and gave feedback to each other. The results from each group were presented afterwards.

Presentation of Candidates for Election of the National Board

Debates on the Proposed Resolutions

- 1) Gender Resolution
- 2) Solidarity Resolution

Presentation by Felix

Felix, a student at UiO from Kenya, came to present his work in an organization called Utdanningshjelpen that works with projects in Africa to help children and students to go to school and stay in school.

Establishment of committees

Three different committees were proposed:

1. Hand book committee – To work further on the already existing hand book and distribute it to the branches. Elena and Sunil will be part of this committee, others may join.
2. Cooperation committee – To work on further cooperation between ISU branches. Mary, Moses and Haris will be part of this committee, others may join.
3. Recruitment committee – To work on recruiting people to ISU. Timothy, Wieneke and Farshad will be part of this committee, others may join.



The first person in each committee is responsible for starting the work.

SUNDAY 19th OF OCTOBER

The Assembly started at 13:30 hours.

Voting on Resolutions

- 20 delegates were present during the voting.
- The first resolution, on gender, was voted down by a majority of the votes.
- The second resolution, on solidarity, was accepted by a majority of the votes with some changes in the text. Two sentences were added and the approval of two thirds of the local presidents was approved (Please refer to ratified Resolution attached).

Election for the National Board

- 20 delegates were present during the voting.
- *Election of National President:*

Two candidates for National President: Current President, Farshad Tami and Timothy Findlater from ISU UiB. Timothy Findlater withdrew his candidacy and **Farshad Tami was elected by acclamation.**

- *Election of 1st Vice President:*

Two candidates for 1st Vice President: Timothy Findlater from ISU UiB and Mary Korotkova from ISU NHH. **Mary Korotkova was elected with a majority of the votes.**

- *Election of 2nd Vice President:*

Two candidates for 2nd Vice President: Timothy Findlater from ISU UiB and Isaac Mensah from ISU Tromsø. **Isaac Mensah was elected with a majority of the votes.**

Suggestions for National Assembly Autumn 2009

BI is ready to take the first NA in 2009 (April).

Narvik is ready to take the second NA in 2009 (October).

ATTACHED:

- List of participants
- Resolution on Solidarity
- Panel discussion outcome and conclusion
- Tentative agenda



List of Participants
National Assembly in Ås
17-19 October 2008

	Name	Position	E-mail address
ISU Branches			
BI/Oslo	Samarth Sharma	Representative from Bachelor	smarth2006@gmail.com
BI/Oslo	Carina Sannerud	Communication Manager	carinasannerud@yahoo.no
Bodø	Elena Egortseva	President	elena.egortseva@stud.hibo.no
Bodø	Makki Mohammad	Vice President	makki_dewar@yahoo.com
HiO/Oslo	Prakas Dhakal	President	prc_dhakal@hotmail.com
Narvik	Ilya Sizov	President	zerocools@rambler.ru
Narvik	Sun Chenyu	Public Relations	dolphincupid@hotmail.com
Narvik	Khalil Dahbi	Vise president	dahbikhalil@gmail.com
NHH/Bergen	John Knudsen	President	john.knudsen@stud.nhh.no
NHH/Bergen	Emma Micklem	Treasurer	emma.micklem@stud.nhh.no
NHH/Bergen	David Riuro Ponce	IT & Communication	david.ponce@stud.nhh.no
NHH/Bergen	Mary Korotkova	Academic Affairs	maria.korotkova@stud.nhh.no
Stavanger	Moses Olaijuwon Ajetunmobi	President	isu_president.stavanger@gmail.com
Stavanger	Wieneke Oomen	Vice-President	wienoomen@hotmail.com
Stavanger	Sunil	Treasurer	sunil52371@yahoo.com
Telemark	Chameera Jayarathna	President	chameera80@yahoo.com
Telemark	Sahar Lotfi	Finance Manager	080577@student.hit.no
Telemark	Shuai Wang	Public Relations Manager	wang_adam@live.cn
Tromsø	Syed Haris Ali	President	sal004@mailbox.uit.no
Tromsø	Isaac Mensah	Vice-President	youngisaac@yahoo.com
Trondheim	Michal El Ghaba	President	elghaba001@yahoo.com
Trondheim	Piotr Ochal	Vice President	ochalpiotr@gmail.com
UiB/Bergen	Timothy Findlater	President	timothy.findlater@student.uib.no
UiB/Bergen	Vendula Vespalcova	Vice President	vendula.vespalcova@seznam.cz
UiB/Bergen	Zuzana Machackova	Board Member	seegee@seznam.cz
UiO/Oslo	Sven Rudolf Thorstensen	President	a0205794@unet.univie.ac.at
UiO/Oslo	Augmante Leonavieute	Vice-President	augmante@gmail.com
UiO/Oslo	Jessica Faulk	Financial Sec./Web.	scrago11@gmail.com
UMB/Ås	Amanda Greaves	President	amanda.greaves@student.umb.no
UMB/Ås	Parkash Yadav	Treasurer	prakash.yadav@student.umb.no
UMB/Ås	Shawn Loo	Secretary	shawn.loo@student.umb.no
UMB/Ås	Tshay Hailemichael	Social Officer	tshay.hailemichael@student.umb.no
UMB/Ås	Jason Hart	Social committee	taktickle@hotmail.com
UMB/Ås	Amit Das	Social committee	amit.das@student.umb.no
UMB/Ås	Amir Mosheni	Social committee	mohseni_fishery@yahoo.com
National Office	Farshad Tami	National President	nationalpresident@isu-norway.no
National Office	Solveig Aamodt	Organizational Secretary	nationalsecretary@isu-norway.no



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' UNION OF NORWAY

	Name	Position	E-mail address
Chairmen			
Chairman	Knut Hjelset	Chairman	knut@rorg.no
Chairman	Åsmund Møll Frengstad	Chairman	aasmund@fregstad.no
Partner Orgs.			
NSU	Marte Sendstad	International Officer	marte@nsu.no
StL	Ina Tandberg	International Officer	internasjonalt@stlweb.no
SAIH	Sigrun Espe	Nestleder	sigrun.espe@saih.no
Other guests			
NSU Ås	Maja Stade Aarønæs	Leder	maja.aarones@student.umb.no
NSU Tromsø	Millicent Adubofour	International Officer	internasjonal@sst.org.uit.no
NSU	Helge Lundsvoll Andersen	Nestleder	helge@nsu.no
NSU Trondheim	Margrethe Gaassand	International Officer	gaassand@stud.ntnu.no
UMB	Knut Hove	Rector	knut.hove@umb.no
SiÅs	Pål Magnus Løken	Board Member	pal-magnus.loken@sias.no
NHH	Thor Robert Groven Olsen	International Officer	thor.r.olsen@nhh.no
UiO Student Welfare Council	Fredrik Refsnes	Leder	fredrik@studentvelferd.no
Spire	Birgitte Skarbø	Board Member	birgitteskarbo@gmail.com
NSU UiB	Renate Tråsavik	International Officer	renate@nsu.uib.no
StL HiO	Ingeborg Anna Wergeland	Leder	ingeborg-anna.wergeland@studentparlamentet.no



RESOLUTION ON SOLIDARITY

International Students' Union of Norway

Date: 19 October 2008

Reference: RES-2008-C

Toward ISU's commitment to the support of and the solidarity with students and student unions worldwide

Background:

ISU acknowledges that students attending higher education institutions are and play an important role in the growth of societies, contribute to the democratic movements and are catalysts for the development of educational institutions in particular and the rest of the society in general. ISU supports, to the best of its abilities, fellow students and student union members worldwide that have or are growing towards a legitimate student representation based on their:

- ... democratic structure and electoral process;
- ... independence from their institutions, government and/or party politics and are seeking the interest of all students in their countries;
- ... tolerance to all students regardless of age, race, color, gender, sexual or political orientation and/or religious beliefs and national origin.

Current Situation:

ISU has no solid commitment towards the support of students and student unions worldwide

Suggested Solution:

ISU to extend its solidarity towards fellow students and student union members attending higher education institutions that are struggling for freedom of speech, human rights, democracy, their rights to education and for better social, economical and political situations in their countries. ISU to strongly oppose any kind of acts of violence, threats of violence, discrimination and/or other forms of suffering against and among students based on their age, race, color, gender, sexual or political orientation and/or religious beliefs and national origin.

ISU proposal:

ISU will, to the best of its abilities, take actions in the form of bringing the issue (of violation of human rights, all acts of violence and/or discrimination) to the public's attention. ISU will support letters, campaigns and/or other acts of solidarity, along with its partners, directed to relevant decision makers and/or human rights organizations in the support of abolishment of all sort of violations of human rights, all acts of violence and/or discrimination mentioned above. Such actions of solidarity need the official approval of two thirds (2/3) of its local branch presidents.

ISU will, to the best of its abilities, sign bilateral agreements with student unions that are affected by all sort of violations of human rights, all acts of violence and/or discrimination mentioned above. ISU can ask student unions in other countries to join our acts of solidarity, the bilateral agreements are not restricted to unions that are affected by struggles.



Panel discussion outcome and conclusion

Objectives of the discussion

The over all objective of the discussion is to find concrete steps on how to increase collaboration between the Studentsamskipnaden and students, focusing on international students.

Points to be discussed

- a) ISU local branches tend to change teams every year, and on one hand, that is a challenge for the international students, but at the same time we need some common tools for them to have so that they do not have to repeat the same process of coordinating with the Studentsamskipnaden every year. How can we ensure that ISU teams will be able to have sustainable tools to serve this objective?
- b) We need to increase cooperation between ISU and Studentsamskipnaden, both at the level of the board and at the level of the employees. How can we ensure the ISU teams will be able to help Studentsamskipnaden solve challenges on daily basis to the best of their abilities?
- c) Internationalization of education policy is an important policy that will have effects on all the education sectors in Norway, including the Studentsamskipnaden. Issues like housing, equal available information in English and others can be of a great challenge for all. How can we work together to prepare for such upcoming challenges?

Agenda for the discussion

- The four in the panel gave presentations of their organizations. The presentations can be found at http://isu-norway.no/NAII2008/NAII_2008.php
- This was followed by a discussion on how international students can cooperate better with these organizations and tips on how to access the decision makers at our different institutions.
- The discussion started with questions from the participants on the presentations of the panel and continued discussing the points outlined above.

A summery of the discussions

Housing

Only 10% of the students in Norway live in student housing, we all agree that this number is too small. The government promised housing for 1000 more students this year, but it remains to be seen when this is realized. The main problem is that there has to be cooperation between Studentsamskipnaden, the state and the local municipality to fund the building and also to find space for student housing. It is a problem in the big cities to find space for building, the biggest problem is in Oslo, Bergen and Stavanger, but we are working on this and we also try to get permission to build more floors, so there will be more space in each house. The government has a goal of housing for 20% of the students. The higher education institutions have high goals for internationalization, but this needs to be followed up with building more student housing, international students need to know that they will have a place to live when they come to Norway.

In Stavanger international students have to pay a deposit when they move to student housing, while Norwegian students don't have to. This is one good issue to discuss with the student parliament, as it clearly unfair. There might be a good reason behind this difference, but it would still be much more fair and defensible if it was the same for all, either all pay deposit or no one pays. This is different from institution to institution, but the problem should be discussed with Studentsamskipnaden in Stavanger.



Health service

38% of the budget is used on health care for students. However, not all the Studentsamskipsnaden have money to provide health service. Some can only provide a minimum due to the cost of such services. In Oslo it is functioning very well, many students would not be able to take care of their health in the same way if there was not free health service at the university. It is important for international students to get information in English on available health service. It is also important to include mental health in the service.

High turn over in ISU local boards

It is smart to write down and document what has been done by the board in order to hand over information to the next board. This is a problem for all student organizations, it is smart to have a database that continuously update with information on what is done and how. The student parliament can also help the new ISU board to get started and give them information on previous cooperation and tips on how to organize. This cooperation is also important in order to avoid misunderstandings, and make sure all important information is given to ISU in English. It will also help if some of the board positions are for one year, so not all the board members will be new each semester, then the new ones can get much information and training from the ones that have already been there for one semester. Some overlap is very helpful.

Problems for international students

Many international students come to Norway without much information, and they are not received by anyone. There should be an increased cooperation between ISU, Studentsamskipsnaden and the student democracy in order to ensure that international students feel welcome and are given appropriate information. International students can also use the student democracy to issue their problems and get help to get their cases through. The education institutions also have to take more responsibility in providing international students with information in English and including them in the academic environment.

Increasing cooperation

To come to the board meetings of samskipsnaden and NSU/StL you have to be an elected member. But ISU members can come to parliament meetings and they can run for election. ISU has an observer seat at the welfare council. To increase cooperation everything should be translated to English. This is a challenge, as it is very time consuming and expensive, but it is important and will be worked on further. StL, NSU and Samskipsnaden represent all the students, they are also there to help international students with their problems.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Students can change things at the institutions, even if the process might be slow. But remember that students have to pay if they fight for an increase in the welfare offered,
- Contact the representatives of the student democracies to get your problems and voices heard, and
- Make a database, report etc. of your activities so it will not be too hard for a new board to take over and continue the work.

List of panel participants

Pål Magnus Løken, SiÅs <http://www.sias.no/>

Anna Wergeland, StL HiO <http://www.hio.no/studentparlamentet>

Fredrik Refsnes, Student Welfare Council at UiO <http://www.studentvelferd.no/>

Maja Stede Aarønæs, NSU Ås <http://www.umb.no/?avd=63>



Tentative Agenda

TIME FRAME	ACTIVITY	SPEAKER
Friday 17th		
13.00 – 13.55	Registration	
13.55 – 14.00	Welcoming	Farshad Tami
14.00 – 14.30	Welcoming speech by Rector of UMB	Knut Hove
14.30 – 14.45	Other speakers	
14.45 – 15.00	Break	
15.00 – 15.45	Samarbeid time	StL, NSU & SAIH
15.45 – 16.00	ISU National report (<i>Part 1</i>)	Farshad Tami
16.00 – 16.45	Presentation on gender in student democracy	Helge Lundsvoll Andersen
16.45 – 17.00	Presentation of candidates running for elections	
17.00 – 17.15	Practicing on voting procedures	
17.15 – 17.30	Information about activities, plans and Q&A	
17.30 – 19.30	Break	
19.30 – 21.30	Dinner	
21.30 – 00.30	UKA Festival and Concerts	
Saturday 18th		
08.30 – 09.30	Breakfast	
09.30 – 09.45	National Vice President reports	Prashant Søegaard and Elena Egortseva
09.45 – 10.00	ISU National report (<i>Part 2</i>)	Farshad Tami
10.00 – 12.00	Discussions with Studentsamskipnaden (<i>How to increase cooperation and welfare between Studentsamskipnaden and student</i>)	SiÅs, Student Welfare Council in Oslo, NSU and StL
11.45 – 12.00	Information about activities, plans and Q&A	
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch	
13.00 – 14.00	Branch presentations	Local branches
14.00 – 15.30	Workshop on Local Branch: (<i>capacities, vision, partners & exchange of idea</i>)	Local branches, StL & NSU
15.30 – 15.45	Break	
15.45 – 16.00	Resolutions Gender (<i>Discussion</i>)	
16.00 – 16.15	Resolution Solidarity (<i>Discussion</i>)	
16.15 – 17.00	Presentation of candidates running for elections	
17.00 – 19.30	Break	
19.30 – 21.30	Dinner	
21.30 – 00.30	UKA Festival and Concerts	
Sunday 19th		
12.15 – 13.15	Lunch	
13.15 – 13.30	Election of Committees (<i>Handbook, Cooperation & Recruitment</i>)	Farshad Tami
13.30 – 14.30	Resolutions, Financial Guidelines, Platform & Constitution (<i>Ratify</i>):	
14.30 – 15.30	Election of ISU National Board	
15.30 – 16.00	Suggestions for National Assembly Spring 2009 (NAi09) and Presidents' Meeting in February	
16.00 – 16.30	Thank you, evaluation & goodbye	