



International Students' Union
of Norway (ISU)

**Minutes of the
National Assembly in
Narvik**

30 October – 1 November 2009

Prepared by

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Prepared for

Member Branches

and

Cooperation Partners

- Studentenes Landsforbund (StL)
- Norsk Studentunion (NSU)
- Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH)
- Utviklingsfondets Ungdom (Spire)

FRIDAY 30 OCTOBER

The Assembly started at 14:10, 40 minutes late due to a flight delay.

Initial greeting by ISU President, Farshad Tami

Welcoming all to Narvik and the second National Assembly in 2009 and introducing the chairman Runar Myrnes Balto.

Welcoming speech by Arne Lakså, Vice Rector of Narvik University College.

Vice Rector Arne Lakså welcomed us to Narvik. The first college in Narvik was established in 1953, since then it has grown to be Narvik University College with 7 bachelor programs and 6 master programs. He emphasised Narvik as a great place to study, especially for international students. The international students are important for the study environment in Norway and it is important for Norway to participate in the increasing internationalisation of education. He hopes the number of international students in Narvik will continue to increase.

The chairman went through the list of participants and the discussion guidelines. 2 delegates were missing.

Presentation of Partner Organizations

Studentenes Landsforbund (StL) – Norwegian Association of Students

- Presentation by Pål Espen Bondestad, Leader of Narvik Student Parliament
StL is very happy with the close cooperation with ISU, they want to thank Farshad for all the work he has done as ISU National President, and they are looking forward to working with the new president and board to be elected. They also hope for further cooperation when StL and NSU merge in June 2010. He mentioned the sad news of an Iranian student in Narvik that was expelled from Norway and hoped the National Assembly would make a resolution on this issue.



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

- Presentation by Runar Myrnes Balto, currently Vice President of SAIH, to be President of SAIH in January.

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. Solidarity is important; SAIH thinks students in other countries should have the same opportunities as students in Norway. He emphasised the importance of ISU for international students in Norway, and that ISU is a unique organisation that SAIH is very happy to be able to work with. He is looking forward to further cooperation with the new national board and he urges the local ISU branches to seek cooperation with the local SAIH branches at their institution of education.

ISU Local Branch Presentations

ISU Narvik

They have a new board this year; all except one person is new. They thus have many new ideas for new projects. The branch arranges trips for international students where they cover some of the expenses, for instance to Lofoten and hiking trips. They advice international students on many different matters and they host many social activities; movies, parties, karaoke, juleball, radio program, sports, language courses, pizza debates and "how to find a job". They also have international students' week and they are hoping for closer cooperation between ISU local branches.

ISU Bodø

They have a high turn over of members in the board, but it is still functioning pretty well. They have coffee hour each week with a different focus every time, this has been increasingly popular. They also have international week where many companies and organisations participate, good bye and welcome parties for students and they have organised a very successful lake tour for students and teachers at the university, 70 people participated. They get good help from the international office, have access to the students' e-mail addresses and they have an agreement with the school media to spread information.

ISU UiB

They have a new board with 12 members from many different countries. They do most of their activities in Fantoft where most of the international students live and where they have access to facilities. They have hosted many social activities; weekly Friday party, Halloween party, football tournament, Indian light festival, quizzes, movie nights etc at Klubb Fantoft. They also have a language café in cooperation with NSU. They have had the Fantoft Student Coalition represented in the Students' Parliament. They have organised student hikes, folk dance courses and they have a facebook group to reach out to students with information. They are working to increase the number of students being offered Norwegian classes and they want to change the image of the Fantoft area to the rest of people in Bergen.

ISU NHH

At NHH they are called the MEBA council and represent all the international master students. They have a new board with 5 members. They have organised pub crawl,



concerts, taste of Norway dinner, Bergen in a nutshell tour, NHH race and international dinners. They also has a team building day together with ISU UiB to get to know each other better, it was a very good experience. They mainly communicate through facebook and their main events are the MEBA Forum and the Christmas dinner.

ISU Stavanger

They call themselves the United Nations of Stavanger, many different nationalities are represented in the board, and there are students from 69 countries in Stavanger. They have a new board since some from the old board moved to other places. They organise international day, BBQ, boat trip to Denmark, costume partymusic dinners and seminars. They have been able to solve the student housing deposit case that has been a priority issue for many years. They would like to work on a new case of removing the age limit for student discount on busses.

ISU Tromsø

They elected a new board in September, but there were some problems with the election not being accepted by all the ones that participated some they have used some time to clear up the problems and misunderstandings. They have now a functioning board and have planned many activities; international evening, Christmas party, trip to Kautokeino and Finland, an event for Children in Tromsø and they have a second-hand shop for international students in Tromsø that works very well.

ISU National Report by Farshad Tami

A presentation of the work ISU has done lately. Politically we have worked mainly on the quota student case which has finally been solved through funding in the Sate Budget. We have also kept our good cooperation with NSU, StL, SAIH and Spire. The main task of the National Board is to represent international students to the Norwegian Government and ensure successful democratic elections at the local levels.

Regional Cooperation Groups

The work on Regional Cooperation Groups has mainly been done by Timothy Findlater and Ilya Sizov. They have written guidelines for the cooperation work that is available on the website. It is recommended that one member of each branch should be responsible for cooperation with other branches in the regional group.

Presentation of Candidates for election of the National Board

Candidates for the National President position:

Timothy Findlater
Karen Contreras Lisperguer
Riccardo Destefanis
George Vlazakis
Gori Gjini
John Ganyo

Candidates for the Vice President positions:

Mateus da Costa



Mark Achaw
Amalia Rylander

SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER

The Assembly started at 09:00 hours.

Magnus Malnes from NSU was accepted as chairman for the rest of the National Assembly.

Presentation of Partner Organizations

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

- Presentation by Magnus Malnes, International Officer.

NSU represents all students at universities and scientific colleges. Their main goal is education for all. Magnus emphasised the issue of tuition fees, something that has been suggested by some scientists in Norway. The NSU and also StL are strongly against tuition fees in Norway as it breaches with the principle of free education for all, and it would especially affect international students and be an extra burden on students coming to study in an already expensive country NSU will stand in solidarity with ISU on this issue and strongly oppose tuition fees for international students.

ISU Local Branch Presentations

ISU Trondheim

They have many international students and a good cooperation with Norwegian organisations. They have a new board with 9 members from different countries. The branch has a basement where they can host most of their activities; parties, basement night, dinners, board games etc. They arrange trips to different places in Norway and they have buddy program to match international students with Norwegian students. They also organise a rental where students can rent skis and other equipment. There is a mailing list that functions very well.

ISU Agder

ISU Agder has a new board with 5 members from different countries. It is a quite new branch so they are starting new activities, for instance an ISU hospitality club. In University of Agder there are around 175 international students. They have arranged the following activities: General Assembly, movie nights, international week, building new webpage, working on a new logo and they are planning to have many more activities like torch night, jazz concerts, Christmas party and a football tournament. They find it challenging to get people involved and the turn over in the board is high.

ISU Telemark

There are five campuses, the main one in Porsgrunn. There are around 200 international students. The goal is to build bridges between cultures. They work to better their issues; better facilities, housing and student jobs. They have organised several activities; Master party, food festival, graduate ceremony, batch photo, winter



trip, Chinese new year, city tour and welcome dinner. They also arrange a welcome week for new students every year.

ISU BI Oslo

At BI there are three different organisations for international students that each has an ISU representative. GSS – they host introduction week, parties, lectures and other activities. INSA- For exchange students. They arrange social events pick-up system, buddies, introduction week, trips, Christmas dinner and talk partner for learning a new language. BBA – English bachelor program. They arrange social events, international parties etc. and their web address is www.bbainsa.no They also arrange guest lectures and seminars.

ISU HiO

They have a new board this year with 7 members from different places. They say it felt like starting from scratch with the organisational work. They are working to get ISU more known at the campus and strengthen it from the inside. They arrange international dinners, buddy program, African drum night, city tours for international students together with the international office, international dinner meetings where they have many participants and a lecturer. They are planning to have more activities and would also like to host the second leaders' meeting for ISU in 2010.

ISU UiO

The branch is very active both politically and socially. They are working to establish cooperation with other organisations. They have had cases in the media on a few occasions concerning issues affecting international students. They arrange social events like parties, food events, salsa night, the monthly moose magazine, international coffee hour, sport tournaments, trips and excursions. They will contribute to the 200 years celebration of Oslo University in 2011. They work for jobs for students, language courses, seminars, work shops etc.

ISU Ås

The university has quite many international students, mainly in development and environmental studies. There 94 nationalities represented. They arrange international food fare, university fare and dancing lessons. They want to expand their activities and plan to do activities in order to get more Norwegian courses for international students.

Financial Report

The financial report has already been approved at the National Assembly in April, but we have now had time to translate the documents as they were in Norwegian previously.

Tackling challenges for the second semester

Two main issues were brought up:

- 1) The difficulties of getting a social security number
- 2) The student arriving Norway for the winter semester in January do not receive the same attention, help and introduction from the universities that the autumn semester students do.

There was also information about the Inclusion strategy that ISU made at the last National Assembly in April, it is available at the website.



Branch concerns and priorities

Stavanger presented the issue of students being exploited by their employers in Norway. This is a problem for several students, and international students are easier targets for such exploitation as they are not always aware of their labour rights. In the cases from Stavanger students were often working without contracts, they were paid little and other matters were also illegal according to Norwegian law. ISU Stavanger has worked with legal advisers and the police on these matters and they are being handled. It is advisable that ISU in these kinds of situations contact the legal advisers at the institution or others working for labour rights in order to get help and advice on what to do to help the student.

Challenges to integrate students in the Norwegian society were also mentioned. It was here advised that it is a good idea to get involved in volunteer work, and the ISU Inclusion strategy has several tips on how to integrate.

Some branches has difficulties with the cooperation with the university. If the university is not helpful and inclusive it is hard for ISU to be visible and reach out to new students. It was suggested that branches can cooperate on this and find out how things are done in the branches where the cooperation with the university is working well.

Two issues for student welfare were brought up; Student housing is always a challenge and this year there has been several cases where international students have not been provided student housing when they arrived even if they had been guaranteed this before arrival. The age limit for student reduction on transport tickets is also considered discriminatory as many students are above the age limit of 30 years. These two cases are also concerns of NSU and StL, so local and national cooperation is recommended.

Presentation of candidates for election of National Board

All the candidates for ISU President and Vice President were given time to present themselves, including answering questions. All the previously announced candidates presented themselves, Amalia Rylander withdrew her candidacy for the Vice President position.

Workshop on student democracy and representation

All participants were divided in four groups to brainstorm ideas on how to better the cooperation between StL/NSU and ISU on a local level. The results of the workshop is presented in a separate document.

Discussion on the suggested resolutions

A resolution suggesting a gender quota in ISU National Board elections was discussed, and several changes to the resolution were suggested. The voting on this resolution and changes is on Sunday.

It was suggested to have a resolution on the case of the Iranian student in Narvik that was expelled from Norway, and it was decided that the discussion and voting on that resolution should be on Sunday.



SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER

The Assembly started at 10:00 hours.

Voting on the gender resolution

The suggested changes to the gender resolution were voted on first and the final resolution was then voted on. The final gender resolution did not receive enough votes to be approved by the National Assembly.

Election of National President

25 delegates could vote for six candidates for the position of ISU National President. Any candidate would need 50% + 1 of the votes to win, so a candidate would win with 13 votes.

1st election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Riccardo received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.

2nd election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Timothy received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.

3rd election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, John received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.

4th election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Karen received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.

5th election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes. George and Gori are candidates for the next round.

6th election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes. George and Gori are candidates for the next round.

7th election round: George Vlazakis was elected President of ISU

Election of First Vice President

25 delegates could vote for four candidates for the position of ISU First Vice President. Any candidate would need 50% + 1 of the votes to win, so a candidate would win with 13 votes.

1st election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Timothy received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.

2nd election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Mateus received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.

3rd election round: Too many votes were counted, a new round was initiated, Mark and Karen are candidates.

4th election round: Karen Contreras Lisperguer was elected First Vice President of ISU

Election of Second Vice President

25 delegates could vote for four candidates for the position of ISU Second Vice President. Any candidate would need 50% + 1 of the votes to win, so a candidate would win with 13 votes.

1st election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Gori received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.



2nd election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Timothy and Mateus received the same number of votes and the next round will be between them to decide who will be candidate in the final round.

3rd election round: Timothy received the least number of votes and will not participate in the next round.

4th election round: None of the candidates received 13 votes, Mateus and Mark are candidates for the next round.

5th election round: Marck Achaw was elected Second Vice President of ISU

Frifond organisasjon orientation

Solveig oriented on the new funding possibility this year, Frifond Organisasjon that ISU get from LNU to distribute to the branches. The Frifond is an addition to the branches' regular funding and the branches should use them for extra activities, it is important that the branches still apply for their regular funding from the institutions. The National Assembly came up with priorities for the next years Frifond that is to be decided on the Leaders' Meeting in February. The suggested themes were: Leadership training; Regional group cooperation; Discover Norway.

The resolution in connection to the expelled Iranian student

The working group presented their suggested resolution on the case of the Iranian student that was expelled from Norway on the background of the UNSC Resolutions on non-proliferation in Iran. The issue was discussed and the resolution was decided to be in general considering the Norwegian authorities' reading of the UNSC Resolution and some changes to the suggested resolution were presented. The changes were then voted on and the final resolution was presented. The final resolution was approved and ratified by the National Assembly.

Conclusion

The National Assembly concluded with thanking Farshad Tami for his work as the president of ISU for the last two periods, and the different branches expressed their gratitude to him and their expectations for further cooperation with the new National Board.

Oslo, 5 November 2009

Magnus Malnes
NSU International Officer, Chairman

Solveig Aamodt
ISU National Secretary