

International Newsletter



HORDALAND
COUNTY COUNCIL



2/14

International Newsletter 02/14

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Hordaland County Council

Hordaland County Council is responsible for county policies within the following fields: Higher secondary education, cultural affairs, public transport, dental health, economic development and regional planning, including the development of the road system.

International projects and activities

Hordaland County Council is involved in many international projects and activities. Our region has signed cooperation agreements with several partner regions abroad. The «Hordaland class» programme gives an opportunity for Upper secondary school students in Hordaland, to study in several of these partner regions for one school year. We also cooperate with other countries as a member of European organisations. The County Mayor of Hordaland has been elected as president of the North Sea Commission and the NSC secretariat has been set up in Hordaland. We are also member of West Norway Office, one of six Norwegian regional offices in Brussels. EU-programmes such as Interreg and Erasmus+ are among the most important tools for internationalisation in Hordaland.

International Newsletter

Hordaland County Council publishes an International Newsletter twice a year, giving you a short introduction to the county's international activities over the previous six months. The list is not extensive, but nevertheless we hope it gives an idea of the breadth of international activities that take place within our region.

All photos are produced by Hordaland County Council, unless otherwise stated.

For more information: www.hordaland.no/internasjonalt

Editor: Barbara.Harterink@hfk.no

1. Our partner regions

Basse-Normandie, France

Les Boréales 2014 – official delegation from Hordaland



Region Basse-Normandie celebrated for the 23rd time "Les Boréales", a Nordic festival for arts and culture. «Les Boréales 2014» had a special focus on two themes: the 200th Anniversary of the Norwegian Constitution and Riga, European Capital of Culture. Highlights under "Weekend-en-Norvège" were the opening concert held by Therese Aune on 14th November, and the Norwegian exhibition BRUDD, about marginalised groups and their lives.

It has become a tradition to visit our partner region during this event and to use it as an arena for professional cooperation between Basse-Normandie and Hordaland. Member of the County Executive Board, Mona Røsvik Strømme, led this year's delegation with administrative representatives from the departments Regional development, Culture and Education.



From the right: Vice-president of Basse-Normandie Annie Anne, Mona R. Strømme from Hordaland County Executive Board and Director Bård Sandal.

Culture, education and economic development

As a result of the cooperation agreement between Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie and Hordaland County Council, signed in 1993, there has been a broad and successful cooperation in different areas. The Hordaland delegation had two busy days with meetings together with their French colleagues in order to reinforce the ongoing work and structure the areas of priority in the coming years.

In the cultural field they had a special focus on the exchange of artists between our regions, in the framework of the so-called "Artist in Residency programme". The Hordaland class in Normandie is a highly valued result of the cooperation. The meetings concentrated on how to enhance the reciprocal exchange of students.

Hordaland representatives, including Business Region Bergen, had several meetings with Miriade, the regional agency for regional development and innovation. The idea was to study how Basse-Normandie has restructured and organised their public services to strengthen growth and development in the region. A return visit will already take place in January 2015..

70th anniversary of D-Day



2014 was the year to celebrate both the 70th Anniversary of D-Day and the 200th Anniversary of the Norwegian Constitution. The delegation from Hordaland visited the D-Day beaches and the Memorial museum in Caen. The visit to these sites was an important reminder that peace and democracy are important values that need protection and defending.

By: Marit.Einen@hfk.no

Letter of intent on mutual student exchange signed

On 8th October 2014 a Letter of intent was signed between the councils of Basse-Normandie and Hordaland in Bergen in the field of education. So far only Hordaland students have been sent to Basse-Normandie, and now the partners agreed on the mutual exchange of students. The signing of this Letter of intent is a new and important step forward in the co-operation between the two regions.

Vice-president of Basse-Normandie Annie Anne expressed great satisfaction that from now on French students will get the chance to study in Hordaland. Hordaland will host the first group of four French students in April 2015. L'Academie de Caen, University i Caen and OFNEC (L'Office Franco-Norvégien d'Echanges et de Coopération) will also be part of this partnership.

In November 2012 the concept of "Hordaland class in Basse-Normandie" was officially agreed by the two regions, giving secondary school students in Hordaland the chance to spend a school year in Basse-Normandie. The intention has always been to make this agreement reciprocal. Many school exchanges have taken place between Hordaland and Basse-Normandie in 2014, involving both upper secondary students, teachers and staff. Read more about this in Chapter 4: Youth and internationalisation.

By: Berit.Roksvag@hfk.no

Artist in Residency programme



The art school in Caen/Cherbourg welcomed the artist Amber Ablett during Autumn 2014. Ablett is newly educated from Bergen Academy of Art and Design. She went to Basse-Normandie on a three months long scholarship in September as a part of the cooperation between Hordaland County Council, Region Basse-Normandie, Bergen Academy of Arts and Design and L'Ecole Supérieure d'Arts & Médias (ésam) de Caen/Cherbourg on an Artist in Residency programme. The aim of this programme is to alternately exchange young artists between Norway and France; one year a Norwegian artist will go to France, the next year a French artist will come to Norway.

By: Tone.Stedal.Haugland@hfk.no

Cardiff, Wales

Student traineeship in Wales



Trainee placement at playschools in Wales provides Norwegian students useful experiences.

During the spring of 2014 six students from Nordahl Grieg Upper Secondary School participated in a three week long student traineeship in Cardiff in Wales. Three of the students are studying Health and Social Care and the others are studying Childcare. The traineeship was possible due to EU-scholarships, and a close collaboration with Cardiff and Vale College.

Knarvik Upper Secondary School has on earlier occasions collaborated with the Welsh school, and helped to establish contacts. Cardiff and Vale College offer the same study program as Nordahl Grieg School, and helped to find workplaces and housing for the students. Teachers from Nordahl Grieg joined their students on the three week programme.

The students carried out their trainee placement at playschools and labour market co-operatives for mentally disabled. The students gained useful practical and intercultural experience, finding differences and similarities between Wales and Norway. Using English in a work situation is a good way to learn languages, and the students even managed to learn some Welsh phrases. During their stay the students gave daily reports through online blogging, which their fellow students back home in Norway could follow.

This was the first time Nordahl Grieg School participated in a student traineeship abroad, which they would like to repeat. One of the students expressed his thoughts in this way: "This trip has been an incredible experience, and I have learned so much. It is a memory for life."

By: Sverre.Lie@hfk.no

Orkney Islands, Scotland

Orkney Christmas tree lighting festival 2014



Surrounded by two guards in Kirkwall, Deputy Mayor of Hordaland Mona Haugland Hellesnes and the convener of Orkney Islands Council Steven Heddle.

On 6th December 2014 Deputy Mayor Mona Hellesnes lit the Christmas tree outside St Magnus Church in Kirkwall. The Christmas tree is a symbol of friendship and the historic and cultural bounds between Hordaland and Orkney islands. Convener Steven Heddle welcomed the delegation at the official reception. Orkney Islands Council, the Orkney Norway Friendship Association (ONFA) and Bill Spence (in his last year as Norwegian Consul) organised a wonderful Dinner Dance in the Town Hall, open to the public.

Since the signing of the twinning agreement in 1983, musical and cultural experiences have been an annual tradition in connection to the Christmas tree lighting. Three musicians from Hordaland, Trio Vibrazzo, toured the islands and held concerts in eight schools in the week prior to the festival weekend. New this year was St Magnus Winter Festival on 7th December, a "winter variant" of the annual St Magnus International Festival in June. Trio Vibrazzo gave a performance in the cathedral together with The Mayfield Singers. Hordaland County musician Frank Rolland played Norwegian folk music on the Hardanger fiddle including a performance with local folk musicians at The Reel.

The departments of Culture in the two regions discussed cooperation on cultural school programmes.

By: Marit.Einen@hfk.no

Thüringen, Germany

Industrial development projects between Hordaland and Freistat Thüringen

The cooperation between Freistat Thüringen / Germany and Hordaland County Council (HCC) with a specific focus on economic development was formally established in a "Communiqué" in 2009, signed by the mayor of HCC. The agreement was related to the former EU planning period (2007-2013), and resulted in nine successful projects between various partners from R&D institutions and industry from both regions, plus invited partners from other EU regions. The last three projects were terminated in 2014. All projects are closely related to industries of great importance to Hordaland such as Marine, Maritime, and Oil and Gas industry. The results are already proven to be relevant and furthermore expected to have a positive and considerable impact within their own fields.

Project 1: "Corrosion Detector : Robust, handheld sensor system technique for 3D analysis for material preserving repair of pipeline systems in complied environments"

From Hordaland: Aker Solutions MMO and Christian Michelsen Research (CMR)

Project 2: "NanoBatt: Enhancement of the performance of electrochemical storage devices by nanostructuring of surfaces and materials".

From Hordaland: University of Bergen, Department of Physics and Technology

Project 3: "SALMON: Sea water quality monitoring and management"

From Hordaland: Institute of Marine Research / Havforskninginstituttet (IMR)

Further cooperation on economic development between our two regions, and opportunities for R&D institutions and enterprises to join in future project, will depend on the direction of, and the prioritized measures in the EU programs for the next planning period (2014 – 2020). For now this is not clarified, and the cooperation between Thüringen and Hordaland is for the time being unfortunately on hold.

By: Lars.Tveit@hfk.no

«Hordaland class»

What?

Study abroad for one school year. This exchange programme is open to all students from the entire region of Hordaland who have completed the first year of upper secondary school (Vg1) within specialisation in General studies, Electronics or Equestrian- and Farrier studies. After the school year abroad the students return to Hordaland and go right into the final school year (Vg3) or in practice (Electronics or Equestrian studies).

Where?

Hordaland County Council is sending second year students (Vg2) to schools in Cardiff (Wales), Erfurt (Germany), Basse-Normandie (France), Bábolna (Hungary) and Missouri (USA). The first Hordaland class started in 1996 in Cardiff. Five secondary schools in Hordaland coordinate the “Hordaland class” programme and follow-up the students abroad.

How Many?

64 students from Hordaland attend their Vg2 school year abroad during the school semester 2014-15. These figures have increased from year to year:

2014-2015: 64 students
 2013-2014: 61 students
 2012-2013: 56 students
 2011-2012: 46 students

Why?

The aim of the “Hordaland class” programme is to give students in Hordaland the opportunity to live and go to school abroad. Increased knowledge of languages, intercultural competence and new friendships and network will equip the students with highly valuable skills regarding the global and multicultural society.

By: Berit.Roksvag@hfk.no

The Hordaland class in Thüringen



The local paper “Thüringer Allgemeine” is not in doubt: the Hordaland class in Erfurt is an exciting news item. Once a month the students will appear in the papers. Ten 2nd year students from Hordaland have been living in Erfurt since September/October 2014. Three of the Norwegian students will stay the whole school year until the Summer 2015, the rest will return to Norway in May.

The article on 16 November 2014 focused on – not surprisingly – Christmas traditions in Norway. The journalist interviewed two of the Norwegian students, who go to two different schools, the Albert-Schweitzer-Gymnasium and Andreas-Gordon-Schule. The Norwegian students agree on thing: This Erfurt experience will give them both language skills and practical training, which will increase their chances on the Norwegian labor market. Askøy Upper Secondary School has coordinated the annual Hordaland classes in Thüringen since 2008.

By: Liv.Skipenes@hfk.no



The Hordaland class in Basse-Normandie



The Hordaland class in Erfurt



A few of the Hordaland class students in Cardiff outside Baskerville Hall in Hay-on-Wye, on a trip around Wales.

Edinburgh, Scotland

Capital lights up for Christmas



Lighting of the Christmas tree in Edinburgh. County Mayor of Hordaland Tom-Christer Nilsen and Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh Donald Wilson, interviewed by Forth Radio reporter Arlene Stuart. PHOTO: Nivine Keating Photography.

"Thousands of spectators packed the centre of Edinburgh last night to see the capital kick off its Christmas celebrations. The Christmas tree on the Mound, a traditional gift from Norway, was lit up, as the count-down to the big day began," writes The Scotsman on its first page (24th November 2014).

A delegation from Hordaland, headed by County Mayor TCN took the annual trip over the NS to Edinburgh in order to take part in the opening of "Edinburgh's Christmas" and to light the Christmas tree. The tree has been an annual gift from Hordaland to the people of Edinburgh since 1986. Since then the tree has been a gift of thanks for the help Scotland gave to Norway, and especially Hordaland, during the Second World War. The Norwegian government was in exile in London from 1940 and Scotland, as a close neighbor to the Western part of Norway, was an important ally taking in ships and sea-farers and offering support. The Norwegian Consulate General in Edinburgh plays an important role in building further on our historical and cultural ties.

This year the Edvard Grieg Choir from Hordaland took the stage as part of the "Edinburgh's Christmas" opening ceremony. The following day the Edvard Grieg Choir performed together with the Scottish choir Scola Cantorum of Edinburgh at "Royal Norwegian Concert" in St Giles Cathedral. Several meetings have taken place to discuss future cooperation projects in the cultural field, i.e. museum exhibitions and cultural heritage.

By: Barbara.Harterink@hfk.no



Edvard Grieg Choir. PHOTO: Nivine Keating Photography.

Scottish and Norwegian Cooperation on Heritage

On 24th October 2014 a roundtable conference was organised in Hordaland in order to discuss Scottish and Norwegian cooperation on heritage. Deputy Mayor Mona Hellesnes pointed out in her opening speech that Scotland and Hordaland have a lot of common challenges in the field of cultural heritage. Both regions are on the periphery of Europe, and by sharing ideas will be able to develop heritage management in Hordaland and Scotland. Through organizing meeting places and partnerships between NGOs, concrete heritage projects and a potential cooperation agreement the bilateral links can be strengthened. Possible projects would be within management of cultural landscape, expansion of renewable energy, preservation of technical and industrial culture heritage, documentation of cultural heritage, development of local cultural heritage preservation, strengthening of the voluntary sector, and planning of world heritage.

Huge interest

Because of a huge interest from the side of NGOs, we had to organize a roundtable conference. We take this as a sign of solid interest in cooperation across the North Sea. The aim of this conference was to strengthen the links, and we do so by among others inviting NGOs from the two regions, says Hellesnes. At the conference were representatives from the Scottish Government, National Trust Scotland, Arts & Business Scotland, Built Environment Forum Scotland and the Norwegian General Consulate in Edinburgh, in addition to organisations and museums from Hordaland and national and regional heritage authorities. The partnership between Scottish and Norwegian heritage authorities started with a Leonardo scholarship on staff mobility in 2013, when representatives from Hordaland County Council visited Heritage Scotland.

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2. Cooperation through European organisations

North Sea Commission

New President

Tom-Christer Nilsen, County Mayor of Hordaland was elected President of the North Sea Commission (NSC) in June 2014. A new Secretariat has been set up in Hordaland and is now running NSC.

The new President intends to visit as many of the member regions as possible during his tenure and accepted an invitation from the region Schleswig-Holstein in November. The meeting was hosted by ExCom member Anke Spoorendonk, The president gave a presentation to the State Parliament's Committee for European Affairs, discussing development of the North Sea region. Then in December two meetings were arranged in Den Haag, the first with the Dutch national representative on the Executive Committee, Mr Bote Wilpstra, with officers from the Dutch member regions. The President also met with Donne Slangen, from Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment who is in charge of Integrated Maritime Policy and is the Director in charge of Dutch involvement in North Sea Strategy. Further cooperation is planned with the Dutch government through working groups

EU Regional Marine Cooperation

The EU Sub-Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Energy of the House of Lords, chaired by Baroness Scott of Needham Market, is conducting an inquiry into EU Regional Marine Co-operation. NSC contributed written evidence to the enquiry outlining the organisation's priority areas including the need for closer cross-border cooperation on maritime spatial planning and energy issues. NSC also proposed this be done within the framework of a macro-regional strategy for the North Sea Region. NSC Executive Secretary was then invited to give oral evidence to the committee in November. The outcome of the enquiry will be published in a report in the New Year.

Preparatory Action

In 2013 the European Parliament granted 250 000 euros for a preparatory action for the North Sea. The aim is to analyse the North Sea region's growth potential and use the findings to investigate the added value of a Macro Regional Strategy for the North Sea area. This preparatory action gives an opportunity to define the added value for increased cooperation in and around the North Sea.

European Commission DG Mare is responsible for implementing the action and is organising a series of stakeholder events. In the light of the recent EU Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning the first event will focus on maritime spatial planning and offshore renewable energy. It will be held in Edinburgh January 29th 2015. The North Sea Commission encourages broad involvement from regions and relevant stakeholders. Private and public sectors as well as research bodies and civil society are invited. This is an important opportunity to influence the future governance of the North Sea region.

North Sea Grid

NSC places the issue of energy high of the agenda. The energy "trilemma" of security of supply, sustainability and affordability is one of the greatest tests facing Europe today. A coordinated approach and governance in the North Sea region in response to the growth in demand for renewable energy could lead to economies of scale, making renewable energy more accessible to all of Europe. This brings with it a pressing need for collaboration between NSR States, regions and private partners on energy and major power generation infrastructure. The first steps have been taken towards a North Sea Grid which will contribute to stabilising energy prices and supply. The North Sea Commission would like to see an integrated, meshed North Sea grid, taking into account the future potential of an increasing renewable energy production and we see a clear need to share our point of view with all relevant North Sea regional stakeholders. The conferences under the preparatory action will set an agenda for these issues and bring together different sectors for exchange and discussion hopefully leading to new models of collaboration and knowledge sharing for increased competitiveness and growth.

By: Kate.Clarke@hfk.no

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

The 42nd General Assembly of the CPMR was held in Umeå, Västerbont 25th -26th September 2014. The conference had the following sessions: What Future for European Regional Policy and CPMR Regions, Connecting Europe globally, Integrated Maritime Policy, Macro-regions and maritime basin strategies for greater European integration and The peripheral maritime regions and the EU's 2030 Energy and Climate goals. President Vasco Cordeiro from the Azores was elected as new president for CPMR.

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3. Projects

Interreg IV B – North Sea Region

Clean North Sea Shipping – Improved Dissemination and Impact

The feedback from the EU on the results and recommendations from the Clean North Sea Shipping project (CNSS, 2010-2014) has been very encouraging, and the EU approved in March 2014 an application from the partnership to co-fund a follow-up project called "Clean North Sea Shipping – Improved Dissemination and Impact". The project started in June 2014, and will run up to October 2015. Partners are Hordaland County Council (Norway), Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht (Germany), Newcastle University (UK), Swedish Maritime Technology Forum (Sweden), Port of Antwerp (Belgium) and Harlingen Municipality (Netherlands). Hordaland County Council is Lead Beneficiary for the project.

The aim is to further develop, visualize and disseminate knowledge about the methods and models from the CNSS, and make them operational, accessible and free of charge to all interested parties. Three internet based instruments will be completed and made available on the CNSS – IDI webpage by February 2015: 1) tools for calculating the total amount of emission from ships on a complete and described voyage port to port; 2) calculation and visualisation of emission from ships in ports, and 3) visualizing North Sea emission scenarios.

Dissemination of updated methods & models will take place in accordance with the Project Communication Plan. A mayor activity will be to take part in a series of relevant, maritime and environmentally focused events in Europe (Brussels, Antwerp, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Oslo), with speakers and stands, in addition to participation at national arrangements.

By: Lars.Tveit@hfk.no

Interreg IV B - Baltic Sea Region

More Baltic Biogas Project

The Interreg project "More Baltic Biogas Bus" follows up the Baltic Biogas Bus project, and aimed to stimulate cities and regions around the Baltic Sea to use biogas driven buses. The project showed cost effective solutions on biogas production as well as distribution and use in buses, and concluded that biogas is the best choice available to lower emissions of greenhouse gases from public transport while also improving inner city air quality.

Extension stage

"More Baltic Biogas Bus" aims at more efficient use of biogas as transport fuel and to facilitate upgrading of more biogas to transport fuel. Partners will invest in serial hybrid biogas buses to be tested and evaluated regarding energy efficiency and fuel consumption in both summer and winter conditions. To further improve the efficiency of biogas use, partners will invest in eco-driving equipment combined with training of drivers in more efficient driving habits. Upgrading technology is another key aspect to ensure more biogas as transport fuel in the Baltic Sea region. Investments will be made in a mobile upgrading unit. Skyss, the public transport agency in Hordaland, will invest in a hybrid biogas buses and eco-driving systems.

Testing

HOG Energi coordinates Work package biogas bus energy efficiency and hybrid biogas-electricity buses. The new buses as well as an ordinary 18 meter gas bus will be tested out by Bergen University College to measure emissions, energy efficiency, fuel consumption and noise inside and outside bus. There has been testing of an eco-drive system

that collects and processes data on individual driver level. The system gives real-time information and feedback to the drivers, uses for coaching of the drivers for more environmental-friendly driving. The results of the eco-driving system and the testing of the buses will be published early 2015.

Partners from Hordaland County Council and Hog Energy presented the project in local seminars in Kaunas, Lithuania and Warsaw, Poland. In November Skyss and HOG Energy hosted a biogas hybrid bus seminar in Bergen, and a short trip with the biogas-electric hybrid was organized.



- The buses are driven by an electric motor, with a battery charged by a biogas motor and by brake energy.
- The longest bus in Norway, 24 meters, and has special license.
- first bus arrived Bergen October 17th.

By: Bjarte.Arvik@skyss.no

Interreg IV B – Northern Periphery

Economusees of Hordaland



Oselvarverkstaden, the first Economuseum in Hordaland.

A series of Economusee films were produced in the summer of 2014. The Economusees of Hordaland needed to showcase their craft traditions by modern information techniques to the public, in order to educate the general public, to receive more visitors and to showcase their crafts better and wider. A digital version of each of the seven Economusee businesses have been made accessible on a specific youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/economusee>



The Hordaland Economusee sites and their stories, as well as their craft practices are now showcased on films and on social media linkages and websites. We hope the film series will make it easier for tourists to find the Economusee sites in Hordaland. Obviously, the films will also make the Economusee network more recognized as a brand. Finally, the films intend to promote and showcase the personal status of and the pride of the craftsmen at the Hordaland Economusees. Come and visit us – you are all very welcome!

ERASMUS + Staff Mobility

During 2014, International services in Hordaland County Council has coordinated thirteen Leonardo mobility projects for staff/ instructors with a total of thirty-seven participants. By exchanging experiences and sharing knowledge in various fields, the projects are a tool to increase competence both in the County Council and in other organisations in Hordaland. In line with European policy and EU programme conditions we emphasize on creating cross-sectorial and multilevel project groups for smarter and sustainable implementation. Other preconditions for the projects are that they enhance cooperation with vocational education within their fields, and use the mobility visits to start planning further project cooperation with their European partners. Here follows one of the projects carried out during Autumn 2014:

Stock fish



In November a stock fish factory in Italy received a visitor from Hordaland. Jo-Anne Alvis has several years of experience working with economusée in Norway. Economusée is a concept that combines culture, craft and tourism to create an economy platform for craft artisans practicing traditional techniques in order to help the crafts survive and create new jobs. Alvis visited a factory in Roverto, Italy, where they soak stock fish. This factory is looking into the possibility of becoming an Economusée.

In Italy, Alvis was introduced to the local culture and history of stock fish by local entrepreneurs who use their free time trying to keep the tradition alive. She visited different wine yards and restaurants where they serve stock fish and also museums and churches where one can find links to the ancient stock fish route.

By: Marit.Einen@hfk.no

4. Youth and internationalisation

ERASMUS + Learners Mobility

Hordaland County Council is one of the most active users of the Erasmus+ mobility programme in Norway. This year Hordaland County Council received 287.388 €, which puts our organisation among the top three of the Erasmus+ grants received in Norway.

Our main target groups are students and apprentices in vocational education. As regional contact point we applied on behalf of sixteen schools and two vocational training offices in 2014. This means 100 mobility projects for students, 15 projects for apprentices and 24 accompanying persons. This autumn we received extra financial support, which will enable us to send even more students abroad. The countries we cooperate with are: United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Sweden and Italy. Students usually have shorter stays between 2-4 weeks while apprentices have longer stays of 12-13 weeks.

In accordance with national and regional strategies, we provide young learners with international opportunities. Through this experience the participants gain important intercultural competence and become more independent and motivated to take initiative. They learn new skills, for example how to cooperate and communicate in foreign languages, which will make them better equipped to the international labor market and the multicultural society.

By: Lene.Fjeldsbo@hfk.no

International Conference in Bergen

«Teaching through International Cooperation» was the title of the conference that took place in Bergen on 4th of November. More than seventy principals and international contacts gathered to learn more about international cooperation in education, and the Erasmus+-programme. Hordaland County Council and its upper secondary schools have long experience in developing and participating in projects in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci- programme. In the new Erasmus+-programme it is important for schools to have a strategy for international cooperation, incorporated in the management strategy of the school.

The conference was opened by County Mayor Tom-Christer Nilsen, who emphasized the importance of international cooperation in the development of

Hordaland. Among the speakers were Harald Nybølet, Counsellor for education at the Mission of Norway to the EU, Vigdis Berg from Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) and Merete Mikkelsen, director of West Norway Office in Brussels. Representatives from Knarvik and Fusa Upper Secondary School shared their experiences with international exchange projects through many years. They stressed the importance of involving the whole school in international activities and not only some individual participants.

By: Berit.Roksvag@hfk.no

Hordaland-Normandie school exchange

Etne Upper Secondary School has started an Erasmus+ project in cooperation with Lycée Paul Cornu in Lisieux in Basse-Normandie. The aim of this project is to exchange teachers and students between the two schools.



At the Radio 102-studio of Lycée Paul Cornu in Basse-Normandie, France.

In Autumn 2014 teaching staff from Etne Upper secondary School visited Lycée Paul Cornu in Lisieux in Basse-Normandie. They discussed the differences and similarities between the two schools and future cooperation projects. They also visited cooperation partners of the school, who were very positive about hosting students from Etne vgs and offer work practice to them. In October two media-teachers from Lycée Paul Cornu came on a return visit. The students of the two schools have started communications and cooperation across borders. We plan to send students to France in March.

We are very satisfied with the exchange project so far, and it is our goal to incorporate more of our education programmes into the cooperation between our schools.

By: Aslaug.Eintveit@hfk.no

College cooperation with England

Teachers and staff from Fitjar Upper Secondary School visited two colleges in London in November, with the support of EU-programme Erasmus+.

First we paid a visit to ADC College in Harrow, North-west of London. ADC College administrate everything from finding practice places and a host family to all kinds of practical issues. This is of great help for our school. Some of the teachers visited three different companies which can offer practice placements, and could recommend these for further cooperation with ADC.

Furthermore we visited Stanmore College. Stanmore offers almost the same educational programmes as Fitjar, and both schools agreed on the exchange of teachers in near future.

In the middle of April four students and a teacher will travel to London. Interested students have to apply, undergo an interview and take an English test. ADC College will then find proper places for four students. The project period is two weeks, and a teacher will travel with them and follow them up in some days.

By: Toril.Levag@hfk.no

French students visit school in Bergen

Twenty students from Collège Lycée Expérimental in Caen visited Nordahl Grieg Upper Secondary School in September 2014. The French students studied Norwegian culture and literature before the visit, and they were interested in experiencing everyday life in Norway.

The French class was hosted by a class from Nordahl Grieg and they had prepared a diverse programme consisting of both activities at the school and field trips. In 2014 the French students have had special focus on the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. It was therefore interesting for them to visit the North Sea Traffic Museum in Hordaland, which tells the story of how the village of Telavåg was totally erased by the Nazis during World War II. Furthermore they visited Science Days in Bergen, and they discovered that both schools have a focus on sustainable development research. The guests also participated in French classes at Nordahl Grieg. Nothing is better than to practice a foreign language with native speakers.

The schools will continue working together over the internet, especially in the field of language, history, literature and science, and a return visit to Caen is also planned.

By: Sverre.Lie@hfk.no

Nordic youth conference (VUK)



A large Nordic youth choir singing the typical local song «Jenter frå Bergen» (Girls from Bergen). In the foreground two students from Fyllingsdalen Upper Secondary school, Markus Sandvik (left) and Jarle Lilletvedt.

This year Hordaland hosted the annual Nordic youth conference (VUK). In total twenty-four students and four teachers from the cities of Åbo, Aarhus, Gøteborg and Flensburg visited Bergen from 21st to 27th September 2014.

Forty years ago Bergen municipality initiated Nordic teacher exchange. The Nordic youth conference started around twenty years ago, each year hosted in turn by one of the above mentioned five Nordic cities. The aim of these exchanges is to promote Nordic cooperation and Nordic cultural identity among students, teachers and school administrators. All participants use their mother tongue, in order to increase mutual linguistic understanding among the Nordic countries.

Fyllingsdalen Upper Secondary School was responsible for this year's arrangement. The three topics for the conference were democracy building, the environment and Nordic music traditions. All students were divided into thematic working groups. One week of preparations resulted in an amazing performance, discussing the three topics in a both entertaining and thought-provoking way.

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Teachers and students exchange Voss-Coutances

Voss Upper Secondary School hosted two teachers from Lycée C. F. Lebrun – Coutances in Basse-Normandie Summer 2014. The two teach the subjects Marketing and English as part of the specialisation Travel & Tourism. Aim of the visit was to find out whether it could be of interest to send French students to study some time in Voss. The two teachers visited several companies in the field of tourism, which could be potential host organisations for French students.

This visit resulted in three students from Coutances having their practice at Fleischers hotel in Voss. The French youngsters learn all about operating a hotel. Both students and Fleischers hotel are very satisfied with the arrangement. One day every week the French students attend classes at Voss Upper Secondary School in the subjects ICT and Travel & Tourism. This has had a positive effect on the whole school. The French students have given a presentation about Basse-Normandie for three school classes, they collaborated with Norwegian students on some school projects, and the Norwegian teachers got a much better insight in the French school system.

By: Trond.Remme@hfk.no

Hordaland teacher visited school in Basse-Normandie



French teacher at Nordahl Grieg Upper Secondary School, Karit Elise Valen, has this autumn been two weeks at the Collège Lycée Expérimental with students aged 11-18 years in Hérouville:

- I have participated in classes at every level, and in many different subjects. In some of the classes I have only observed, while in others I have participated and interacted with teachers and students. This gave me the chance to learn much about a school system, which I only knew from the outside. This has been an incredible positive and instructive experience. Trollstipend and support from my school and family made this possible.

By: Karit.Elise.Valen@hfk.no, Sverre.Lie@hfk.no

Learning for Leadership in the Future



The delegation from Nordahl Grieg Upper Secondary School, at the international conference in Leicester, UK.

Good values, vigor and dedication are core qualities for sustainable leadership in future. Through participation at the international conference "Learning for Leadership in the Future", Nordahl Grieg Upper Secondary School wanted to give their students the possibility to develop personal and organisational skills. In addition to the Norwegian students, there were participants from England, Sweden and Germany at the conference which took place 29th September 29th to 3rd October at Beaushap College in Leicester, United Kingdom. Through lectures, field trips, games and roleplay, competitions and group work, the students learned about potential challenges future leaders will meet.

After their return back home the participants from Nordahl Grieg have actively engaged themselves in the school environment. Some develop projects and act as young mentors for sustainable development, others are involved in the school environment committee.

The conference resulted in many friendships. Social media groups have been established among students and staff. A broad network is a vital tool for future leaders!

By: Sverre.Lie@hfk.no



Hordaland and French students in Bergen.

Erasmus+: Youth in Action



Group picture from the project "Ambassadors of the reduction of waste" in front of Mont Saint-Michel, Normandie, France.

Erasmus+: Youth in Action makes an important contribution to the acquisition of competences. It is therefore a key instrument in providing young people with learning opportunities for non-formal and informal learning with a European dimension. The programme gives financial support to youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service (EVS), youth initiatives and seminars for youth workers. Hordaland County Council – International Services is regional contact point for EU's programme for youth, and gives advice to municipalities and youth organisations in developing international youth projects

European Voluntary service

Hordaland County Council has been EVS sending and coordinating organisation since 1999. Many young people in our region have had the chance to live in another European country, gaining working experience, language skills and intercultural competences. This year we started to cooperate with our colleagues at the Follow-up service in Hordaland who work with early school leavers. We also cooperate with several municipalities on EVS projects for young people at the age of 18-30.

Youth projects

During the second half year of 2014 we sent several young people from Hordaland to EVS projects abroad. Two young people were volunteers in the Netherlands, organizing activities for children and youngsters at a multi-cultural Summer Holiday project in The Hague. Later this year these two attended an EU-financed training for volunteers in Berlin. Another volunteer has been working for a youth project in the countryside in France for two months.

Three young people have been sent to St.Pierre de Coutances in our partner region Basse-Normandie and participated in a Youth in Action seminar about waste management. Two of them were sent by the United Nations Association of Norway ("FN-sambandet"), and they made a blog about the project in Norwegian: blogg.fn.no/2014/09/miljoturister-i-normandie/.

New projects have been under preparation. In January 2015 three young volunteers will leave Hordaland, two for a 2 month project in Turkey saving the sea turtles, and one for a 12 months project in the Netherlands.

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5. West Norway Office in Brussels



The Hordaland participants at «Open Days 2014» in Brussels.

Hordaland County Council has for over a decade been an active member of the West Norway Office (WNO) in Brussels. This autumn, a delegation from the Department of Regional Development attended “Open Days” - The European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels. This is an annual conference organised by European regions and cities in collaboration with the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission. A broad set of topics was presented and discussed during the week in Brussels and WNO hosted two different workshops that took place in Norway House. The Hordaland delegation got valuable input through the different seminars and debates they participated in.

In November, Hordaland County Council and West Norway Office co-hosted the local event of Open Days “Is our region smart enough?” in Bergen. The participants were given an introduction to the term “smart specialisation”, what it means and how these strategies can be used to create regional development. Examples of already ongoing work with smart specialisation strategies from other regions in Norway were presented. These were inspired both by the EU model and by those who had found smart solutions in other ways. The conference was concluded by a panel debate including all the speakers.

WNO also had the pleasure of hosting a meeting for the Executive Committee in the North Sea Commission (NSC) in the end of October. The meeting was chaired by the County Mayor of Hordaland, who is currently the President of the NSC.

Hans Inge Gloppen at the Economic Development Section in Hordaland County Council has this autumn been writing his master thesis about Norwegian lobbyism in Brussels. In December, he spent two weeks at the West Norway Office in Brussels and interviewed many relevant actors during his time at the office.

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Hordaland County Executive Board in Denmark



The Hordaland County Executive Board, Chief Executive and Directors in Copenhagen

In Norway, the national government is currently working on an extensive structural reform that could change the division of municipalities and counties. This work is likely to have an impact on both the county of Hordaland and the Hordaland County Council.

To be in front of this development, the County Executive Board visited Denmark and Copenhagen this autumn. The main aim of the trip was to learn from Denmark’s experience from their structural reform of 2007 and the process leading up to this reform. During the visit the Hordaland delegation also met relevant actors from local and regional public transport authorities and visited a successful production school just outside of Copenhagen.

6. Other activities

Faroe Islands study trip



26th-27th August a study trip to the Faroe Islands took place. The delegation from Hordaland wanted to learn from their experiences in the field of aquaculture and how to deal with challenges with viral disease, as part of the development of a Regional coastal zone plan for South Hordaland and Outer Hardanger.

The lowest aquaculture mortality rate in the world

The Faroe Islands have a stable sea temperature all year, and the shallow fjords with strong current are suitable for aquaculture. The industry produces 70.000 tons of salmon annually. At the start of the last decade the industry was badly hit by the virus ILA. Now they have the lowest aquaculture mortality rate in the world, much because of restructuring and new preventive requirements.

Meeting with the Ministry of Trade and Industry

On the first day of the visit, a meeting was planned with the Ministry of Trade and Industry at the Nordic House in Torshavn. The Hordaland delegation was briefed on legislation and framework conditions for aquaculture in the Faroe Islands, with a main focus on challenges with ILA and preventive measures. The Faroe Islands have focused on placing fish farms in locations exposed to waves and currents.

One fjord – one plant

In the Faroe Islands they stick to the principle of "One fjord – one plant". All the fjords in the Faroe Islands suitable for farming have got the status as a farming-fjord. With only four operators, this is manageable. The locations in the fjords are bound, but they are larger than in Norway. There are no limitations on biomass, but it's been set a maximum limit on fish density.

Strong precautions against disease

To prevent disease all smolt are vaccinated and the transport of smolt is heavily regulated. It has also been made peremptory to lie the plants fallow for two months. This is to prevent infection between different generations of fish. In addition the operators are obligated to report all incidents of disease, and the Food Safety Authority has monthly inspections.

On the second day of the visit, the delegation went to Oyndarfjørður at Eysturey to see the Marine Harvest plant. At Oyndarfjørður they have co-located the fish hatchery, the fish farm and the processing. The tour ended with a visit to the location in Sørvagsfjørður, a farm exposed to strong wind and waves from the northeast.

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"Library as a meeting place for many cultures"

Hordaland County Library has for the past two years been involved in the Polish project "Library as a meeting place for many cultures", which is co-funded by Iceland, Norway and Lichtenstein (EEA-funds). Leading partner is The Information Society Development Foundation in Poland. Hordaland County Library and Bergen Public Library are two of six Norwegian participants.

The aim of the project is to develop a model of a library integrating a diverse local community. Librarians should be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary in planning and implementing multicultural activities, in close cooperation with minority groups. The basic idea of the project is that every library is a meeting place for people of different ages, needs, and from various cultural backgrounds. A library should be an open, friendly and safe place for everyone, including immigrants and refugees.

In 2014 there was a project-conference in Warsaw, where Hordaland County Library shared their experiences on multicultural library services. Several mini-projects have been carried out. Hordaland County Library has cooperated with libraries in the region of Goldap, in the north-east part of Poland and two exchanges have taken place. An exhibition about the Polish poet and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Wislawa Szymborska, is now touring the libraries in Hordaland. The main purpose of the exhibition is to gain closer relations between the libraries and Polish inhabitants, and to build bridges between Polish and Norwegian citizens.

"Library as a meeting place for many cultures" came to an end in December 2014. For Hordaland County Library our participation has been an interesting and rewarding experience, and we will certainly consider participating in similar projects again if we get the chance.

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Hordaland County Council is responsible for developing Hordaland society. We provide upper secondary education, dental health services and public transport for our citizens.

We develop the road system and facilitate growth, economic development, leisure activities and culture. The Council is the county's political decision-making body.

As part of national and global society we are responsible for taking care of the past, the present and the future in Hordaland.



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