

Interaction with our cooperating regions.

Basse-Normandie, France



Sante-Mer Symposium

Representatives from Hordaland County Council participated in the Sante-Mer Symposium in Granville, Basse-Normandie from October 3rd to 6th, together with representatives from the University of Bergen, Norwegian Seafood Centre, Marine Biproducts and Innovation Norway. The conference provided an interesting status report to the field of biotech in different countries.

In addition to participation in the conference, Mme Louisa Dufresne-Rebuffat at the *Direction de l'Agriculture* helped the delegation in organising several company visits to businesses such as **SATMAR** (Europe's largest mollusc hatchery), **GRANVILMER** (processing plant for molluscs and crustaceans) and **SMEL** (research- and development centre). The fact that representatives from different institutions in Hordaland made these connections together was very useful and may hopefully lead to concrete results. [More](#)

Student placement on farm in Hardanger

The French student Stéphanie Bouteiller (21) had a three-month placement at a farm in Hardanger this fall. After university studies in Caen, and an Erasmus stay at the University of Bergen, the student looked for the opportunity to study the practise of agro tourism in Norway. In planning her experience, the student was assisted by the European Office, as well as Thomas Herman, a French student who had received a scholarship from the Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie in order to intern with International Affairs in Hordaland.

Cardiff, Wales



Generation Europe

Cardiff County & City Council invited their cooperating regions to take part in the seminar "Generation Europe", October 15 to 17. The main theme for the seminar was the challenges met by the younger and the older generations. This relates to EU's anti-discrimination laws and the fact that 2007 is "The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All".

In addition to Hordaland, Cardiff had invited their friendship cities Nantes (France), Stuttgart (Germany) and Lugansk (Ukraine). Hordaland County Council was represented by the president of the Seniors' Council

(Eldrerådet): Olga Johannesen, the president of the Youth Forum (Ungdommens Fylkesting): Jan Arthur Nilssen, head of secretariat for the Youth Forum: Astrid Marthinussen, administrative contact for the Seniors' Council: Dagmar Reutz Hillestad, and Barbara Harterink who is the administrative contact at the County Council. *We learnt a lot about the current status of youth initiatives and senior care in other countries. To meet those who work a little bit differently than what we do in Norway is interesting and useful.* So far, Hordaland has not had many projects specifically targeted at crossing the "generation gap" but this experience presented some exciting new opportunities. A useful start can be to organise new meeting places between young and old; joint events and seminars. [More](#)

Delegation of city planners

In November, the network for urban and structural planners in Nordhordaland, together with representatives from the County Governor and County Council in Hordaland visited Cardiff in order to study the administration of planning and building matters. The Welsh capital has undergone a dramatic change over the last few decades and has been able to reinvent themselves as a modern and innovative city. The building control has also undergone a modernisation and reorganisation and is today competitive compared to the private agencies. The delegation from Hordaland was able to meet with several central offices and received a lot of information concerning how these matters were organised in Wales. This may serve as inspiration for the work in Hordaland. [More](#)



(Photo: Marit Rødseth, HFK)

Exchange of High School students

The exchange of high school students is also an important part of the cooperation. For the academic year 2007-08 there are 16 students from Hordaland attending several high schools in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, organised by Knarvik Videregående in Hordaland.

Orkney Islands, Scotland



Exchange of High School students

The exchange of high school students is an important part of the friendship between Hordaland and the Orkney Islands. Every year, two students from each region get to spend a year in the sister-region. For the Academic year 2007-08 there is one student from Slåtthaug Videregående at Kirkwall Grammar School, while two students from Kirkwall are spending a year at Voss Folkehøgskole.

Kaunas, Lithuania



Last module of school development project

The project "Governing of Learning Organisations" is a cooperation between the school authorities in Hordaland and Lithuania (Vilnius and Kaunas), as well as individual high schools and the University of Bergen. The 4th, and last, module of this project was conducted in Lithuania in September with 13 Norwegian school leaders and 15 from Lithuania. The theme for this last module was School management, with a focus on leadership for change and the school leader as an academic leader. The sessions took place in Kaunas, Vilnius and Klaipeda. The overall outcome of this project is currently being evaluated.

Exchange of High School students

The exchange of high school students is also an important part of the cooperation. For the academic year 2007-08 there are two Lithuanian students attending the folkloric dance section at Manger folkehøgskole.

Conference at the Kaunas Technical University

On November 30th, the Lithuanian Regional Research Institute, located at the Kaunas Technical University hosted a conference "*Competence development of the human resource in problematic regions of Lithuania*". This conference discussed current issues in regional development in Lithuania, and the challenges that the regions face. What can, not only the state level, but also institutions like the universities do to contribute to the regional development? Speakers included representatives from the ministry of interior, the ministry of finance and the ministry of the regions. Thore Thomassen from Hordaland gave the presentation "*Human Resources in regional development – a case from Western Norway*".



Rounding off the day, there was a graduation ceremony for the first group of students having finished a new masters degree in regional development. The students were all civil servants employed at different levels of local administration in Lithuania. This ceremony can be seen as a symbol of some of the efforts that are made to improve the human resource situation in the regions.

Thüringen, Germany



High School class in Erfurt

Eight students have been picked out to form the new Hordaland class in Erfurt. A lot of applications came in from all parts of Hordaland, and it was not an easy task to pick out those eight who would finally get an offer.

After the students had been accepted, they immediately started with preparatory classes in German at Askøy Videregående, which is the coordinating school for this project. Liv Skipenes is project manager for internationalisation and responsible for the class, and has also been in charge of the German classes. *We will teach them German everyday language, because this is what they will need when they first arrive in Erfurt in October, she stated in an interview in August. And before they leave, we will also have gone through a wide spectre of questions relating to culture and society.*

The background for this initiative is a will to reverse the negative trend of fewer Norwegians learning German. Germany is one of Norway's closest trade partners and our businesses need people with German skills like never before. This class in Erfurt may turn out to be an important contribution that maybe more districts could learn from.



The Hordaland class for Erfurt gathered for their first day of schooling at Askøy. F.left: Niclas Sunde, Thomas Bøthun, Kathrine Kvamme, Nicolai Peters, Heidi Mjølunes, Simen De Lange, Alexander Bang, Daniel Ynnesdal, contact teacher Thor Andreassen og project manager Liv Skipenes. (Photo: Tormod Valaker)

Edinburgh, Scotland



Family from Edinburgh visits Bergen

After winning a prize draw in the local newspaper *Evening News* in Edinburgh, Pauline Wood brought her three grandchildren Reece (16 yrs), Kelsay (10 yrs) and Ronan (7 yrs) over to spend a week-end in Bergen, November 2-4. The occasion was the annual cutting of Hordaland's Christmas tree to Edinburgh. Unfortunately the tree felling ceremony had to be called off last minute, but there was plenty of other activities



that allowed the family to see what Bergen had to offer, this cold November week-end; a trip to the Bergen aquarium, a visit to the new science centre, and Sunday even provided a crisp blue sky for the trip to the city's Mt Fløyen. The Wood Family was also present at the lighting ceremony in Edinburgh in December.

Joint activities

Youth Camp

In August, Hordaland County Council organized an international youth camp called "Youthful, Active and Healthy Lifestyle", at Voss. The participants came from Hordaland's partner regions Cardiff (Wales), Basse-Normandie (France) and Kaunas (Lithuania) and Thüringen (Germany) as well as from Olomouc (Czech Republic), who had all been invited to send 8 participants each to a 10-day stay in Hordaland.

The 48 participants spent most of their stay at Dalane Fjellstova at Voss, after an initial two days in Bergen. The program included two workshops with themes as diverse as youth democracy and healthy eating. The camp had a focus on outdoors experiences with activities such as hikes, rafting, rappelling and spending the night in a "lavvo". Every night one of the countries was responsible for a cultural event, presenting their country and traditions.

Throughout the process there was a strong focus on youth participation – they were represented in the steering committee and the working group, and the project manager was also a youth himself. The youth was also involved in planning the program for the camp ever since the start. An additional wish from the project group was to include youth of different background and the Norwegian group included youth selected by a variety of organisations in Hordaland.



The 48 participants got a memory for life and they all agreed that they had learnt a lot. Two Norwegian girls commented; "*The most important thing that I have learnt is to not judge people before you have learnt to know them properly!*" Pictures, as well as the first hand experiences can be found on the following [website](#).

Christmas festivals

Each year Hordaland gives a Christmas tree to three of its cooperating regions; Cardiff, Orkney Islands and Edinburgh. What started off as simple tree lighting ceremonies have over the years developed into broader cultural exchanges, and in some places play part in the local winter- or Christmas festivals.

The first set of events this year was in Edinburgh on Thursday 22nd of November. This lighting of the Christmas tree on the Mound marks the start of 6 weeks of Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations. Evening News competition winner Kelsay Wood (who also visited Bergen earlier in November together with her family) was one of the two girls who pushed the plunger to light up the city. Hordaland County Council's convenor Mrs Toril Selsvold Nyborg made a speech on behalf of Hordaland. There was also a Grieg-programme performed by musicians from Hordaland during the pre-Christmas concert in St. Giles Cathedral later that night. On Friday evening there was a traditional Christmas party uniting representatives from the two regions.

Mrs Nyborg and the musical trio went on to the Christmas tree ceremony in Cardiff, which was to be held on Sunday the 25th of November. Both Mrs Nyborg and the Lord Mayor of Cardiff made speeches stressing the importance of an active relationship between the two regions, before lighting the Christmas tree outside the Norwegian church in Cardiff. Later that evening the Grieg-programme was performed in the Visitor's centre in Cardiff.

The last of the Christmas festivals this year was the Orkney Islands, where the Christmas tree outside the St. Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall was lighted on Saturday December 1st after a St. Lucy ceremony inside the cathedral. Deputy County Mayor Tom Christer Nielsen represented the County Council in this ceremony. The week prior to this, Hordaland County's musical trio "Fable Folk" had participated in school concerts and local Christmas ceremonies on several of the islands. On Sunday the 2nd of December it was time for the main event, a concert in St. Magnus Cathedral with the Mayfield Singers and the St. Magnus Festival Choir and Ensemble, performing the newly written piece "Winterings". [More](#)



Projects

Interreg III projects

The Interreg III programme was formally ended in late 2006 early 2007, although some projects (like Nortrail) are continuing into 2008.

ENABLE

The overall objective of the ENABLE project was to form an EU "mini programme" as a strategic concept for interregional partnerships focused on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The programme supported individual projects in 3 thematic areas; Technology Transfer, Networks and Start-up-Stimulations. In total, there were 21 individual projects of which Hordaland participated in 11. The participating regions were Western-Norway, Kaunas (Lithuania), Thüringen (Germany) and Carinthia (Austria).

ENABLE was finalised in March 2007 and is for the most part deemed to have been a success. The EU commission was very satisfied with the achieved results of the project. The outcomes have also, to a large extent been integrated into the Regional Development Program in Hordaland. Currently, most of the partner regions from ENABLE are coming together to see if some of the positive results can be further capitalised in a new application under IVC.

Northern Maritime Corridor

The Northern Maritime Corridor (NMC) is a project started in 2002 and was then funded by the two INTERREG IIIB programmes, the [North Sea Programme](#) and the [Northern Periphery Programme](#). The project aims to facilitate the safe development of the maritime route from the Barents Region along the Norwegian coast to the core of Europe. It addresses the following issues: the development of regional maritime clusters, the promotion of Short Sea Shipping, transport in the petroleum and the seafood sector and risk management strategies. The project will run until June 2008. The present partnership in the North Sea region covers 7 countries (Flanders, The Netherlands, Germany, England, Scotland, Denmark and Norway). In addition has three regions in North West Russia participated in the project. Rogaland County is lead partner in the project. Hordaland's transport department has notably been involved in Work Package E: "Polycentric Port Scenarios and Framework Conditions for Short Sea Shipping" [More](#)

The results of the NMC project will continue in a new project under IVB; "Motorways of the Seas – Strategic Demonstration Project" where Hordaland is now seeking to be a partner.

NAVE Nortrail

A project working with promoting sustainable cultural tourism through regenerating a number of walking trails along the North Sea coast. Activities include development of the information, services and infrastructure required for promoting the trail. The ultimate aim is develop a walking trail all along the North Sea coast. Related to the Nortrail project Hordaland participates local projects like "Smak av Nordsjøløypa" (a taste of the North Sea Trail) and "Perler i Norsjøløypa" (Gems along the North Sea Trail) [More](#)

Interreg IV projects

The application process is still ongoing for most of the Interreg programmes. Hordaland has the opportunity to be a partner in the following programmes; Interreg IV B: The North Sea Region Programme, Northern Periphery Programme and Østersjøprogrammet and Interreg IV C; Interregional Cooperation. [More](#)

Applications submitted by Hordaland County for the Interreg IV include:

Economusees Northern Europe (N. Periphery Progr)
Economusee Northern Europe will combine 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. The project, which focuses on rural or remote communities, will assist with business development, showcasing indigenous crafts, job creation and training of young people. The project is based on a successful Canadian model with 20 years experience and will see them all adopt a common style for all the Economusee's and be part of the joint internet site. The project is a collaboration between partners in Norway, Iceland, Faeroe Island, Rep. of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Canada.

Small Scale Business Clusters in Coastal Areas

 (North Sea Region Progr)

The project focuses on locations, with a legacy of previous industrial activity, and from a broad range of spatial locations in 5 different countries. Currently these sites are underdeveloped; and often appear to be unattractive - the opportunity for growth and sustainable employment, as well as community pride and involvement is being lost. The partnership will develop small-scale business clusters and networks to increase and enhance employment opportunities, provide training and social economic activities and facilities, which will increase the opportunity for a sustainable future. Hordaland County Council, working with the Hardanger Ships Preservation Centre, has ambitious plans to create a large business style cluster, which involves the whole village. They are also plans for a "virtual" cluster of Maritime Heritage sites.

Other projects

EuropePEER SME

How do you create growth and creativity in a region? In order to find the answer to this question, numerous projects, intended to stimulate the growth of the European business sector has been carried out. Some have been more successful than others. The objective of Europeer SME is to find out why some projects are more successful than others and what the condition is for transferring a project from one region to another. The project is financed through EU's 6th Framework program for research and technical development (OMC-NET) and runs for 18 months. The participants are 15 regions from 10 different countries that have all picked their most successful projects to be evaluated by the consortium. The method used to evaluate the projects is the "Peer Review Method". Hordaland has chosen its "Competence broker" project for evaluation. This is a qualitative method for strengthening the interaction between the business and the research institutions. This project was evaluated this December at a meeting in Erfurt – the last one in a series of 5 "Peer Review Workshops". The results from these workshops will now be summed up and the project will be finalised in October 2008.

Educational Activities

Leonardo da Vinci Program

From 2007 the Leonardo da Vinci program became part of EU's program for Lifelong Learning. As part of the launching of this new program, several information meetings have been held in Bergen, some of them in cooperation between the County Council and SIU.

As the regional coordinator for the Leonardo da Vinci-programme, Hordaland County Council, every year, sends out between 50 and 70 people to different countries in Europe for placements in companies and institutions in order to strengthen both their professional and personal competencies. The programme is intended for apprentices, students in vocational secondary schools, as well as teachers and persons responsible for training in companies.

Taking part in a Leonardo da Vinci-project gives people a wonderful opportunity to get some international work experience and very valuable as part of one's CV, so don't hesitate, take part in the programme! [More](#)

Youth in Action Program

Youth in Action is the successor to EU's YOUTH in Europe Program (2000-2006). This program is a supplement to the LifeLong Learning Program by the fact that it is concerned with the non-formal learning process of young people. The European Office at Hordaland County Council is the regional coordinator for this programme. It offers youth between 13 and 30, as well as other people working with youth, several ways to acquire an international experience; European Voluntary Service (encouraging young people to take part in a voluntary activity abroad that benefits the general public), Group Exchanges (up to 60 participants) and Youth initiatives (financial support for innovative ideas from groups of young people). An example of the last type of actions was a group of youth in Loddefjord, west of Bergen, who received 50'000 NOK to a new youth house. [More](#)

Active High Schools

Many of the high schools in Hordaland are very active in the international field. Below, you will find a few examples of activities from the last 6 months

Laksevåg Videregående visits Seattle

This year, Bergen celebrates the 40th anniversary of its partnership with the city of Seattle in the US. In relation to this, a group of 28 students and 2 teachers from Laksevåg high school in Bergen visited Seattle and Roosevelt High School in October. It was teacher Odd Sætre and his long-term connections in Seattle that made this possible (together with the financial support of Hordaland and the city of Bergen). The students had prepared a show that presented the characteristics of Bergen through film, PowerPoint presentations, dance and interviews. The show was performed both at

Roosevelt High Schools and for Norwegian-Americans at Leiv Eriksson's Lodge. The students also meet people of Norwegian decent at the Nordic Heritage Museum, and thus got to experience both the strong Norwegian heritage in the area, as well as the daily life for high school students in Seattle. A visit to the University of Washington was also arranged for them. [More](#)

Study visit to Bjørgvin videregående

Study visits for education specialists is one of the transversal programmes in EU's new programme for lifelong learning (LLP). This is the fourth year running that Bjørgvin videregående skole, with international coordinator Maria Sanchez Olsen as primus motor has hosted a study visit. This year they had 13 participants – a group of perfect size according to the organizers. Bjørgvin high school has focused on new learning methods, codetermination and internationalisation. The new reform, where ICT is part of the basic knowledge, was presented and discussed during the visit. The important thing is that decision makers from different countries come together, all carrying their own set of experiences. *"A good thing is that when you have one program running, it is easier to see the possibility for new programs and exchanges"* states Maria Olsen to SIU's magazine. *"Maybe a mobility project can be the next opportunity"*

Sotra Videregående's cooperation in Zambia

Sotra videregående has cooperated with Mbala High School in Zambia in the project *"School integrated entrepreneurship – a pilot approach to capacity building at Mbala High School"* since 2005. The project has also included assistance from Hordaland County Council as well as Eid Videregående in Sogn og Fjordane County. The project has aimed at providing active support in integrating young entrepreneurship into the teaching in Zambia – a country with an 80 % unemployment rate. The teachers from Sotra have spent much time demonstrating the principle of "learning by doing". They must have succeeded - as the number of students participating in entrepreneurship activities has increased from 30 to 110 in the last year. This fall, Einar Gilberg from the Department of Education in Hordaland, as well as three teachers from Sotra, visited Mbala to evaluate the result so far and to discuss further cooperation.

Projects that received support from HFK, fall 2007

September allocation

- Voss Gymnas; Project with Zrenjanin College in Serbia *"to develop democratic attitudes in a multiethnic society in a globalized world"*
- Bergen Handelsgym; Project with Vilnius Vidurinė Mokykla in Vilnius *"to document the history of deported Lithuanians on film"*.
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- Kvinnherad vgs – in order to expand the fields in which students are placed in the area around Alfaz del Pi, Spain.
- Garnes vgs – to support field trip to Brussels, Paris and the “physics capital” of CERN, Switzerland.

December allocation

The distribution of funds according to the applications that came in for the December 1st deadline will not be available until the end of December.

Other activities

Jonas Gahr Støre meets youth from Hordaland

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Jonas Gahr Støre, had invited youth in Hordaland to a debate in the Youth European Forum on November 9th. The themes for the discussions were environment- and climate policies. Hordaland Children and Youth Council was responsible for this event at the Youth House 1880. After a short introduction by the minister about the current climate challenges, the 50 persons present divided into groups to discuss possible actions, which they later presented. Støre said that it will be decisive what big countries like China and India will do in the next few years, but that we definitively have a responsibility here in Norway too. He encouraged the youth to engage in our common future. The youth seemed very pleased with the meeting and appreciated being taken seriously and listened to by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.



(Photo: Hannelen Leirvåg, HBUR)

Participation in international organisations

Association of European Regions (AER)

Hordaland is one of 250 member regions in AER, which was founded in 1985 to increase the dialog and cooperation between European regions. The County Mayor, Toril Selsvold Nyborg is currently one of two Norwegian board members. In addition to participating in the general assembly and board meetings of AER, Hordaland has also participated in a preliminary project together with 3 other European regions, and a research institute in Basel. The project was titled *Decentralisation Indicators* and aimed to determine and establish a set of indicators for the quantitative measurement of “competencies”, “autonomy”, “policy leeway” or simply “power”. The research programme was therefore ambitious: it wanted to come up with a set of indicators that measures the regions’ power to shape their own development by means of politics and how this affects their growth.

Committee on Peripheral and Maritime Regions

Hordaland is one of the 156 member regions in CPMR. Head of Planning- and environment, Gudrun Mathisen represented Hordaland County Council at CPMR’s 35th General Assembly in Florence, Tuscany, 17 – 19 October. CPMR has over the last year had regular meetings with EU and the national governments. They produce both scientific and political documents, host conferences and have working groups on different key areas. CPMR’s contribution to strengthening the regional policy and territorial cohesion in the EU budget, as well as their effort to strengthen the regional influence in policies concerning research and innovation, employment and training, can be highlighted. In 2007 CPMR has engaged itself even stronger on the international arena through the leadership of the new global network of regions – FOGAR.

The final declaration highlighted the regions role in the current globalisation, where maritime policy and climate changes are central themes. [More](#)

North Sea Commission

The North Sea Commission was founded in 1989 as a sub-commission to CPMR, in order to facilitate and enhance partnerships between regions by the North Sea. The NSC has 36 member regions, 15 from Norway. Cllr. Gisle Handeland, from the Hordaland County Council, is the National representative in the Executive Committee. The North Sea Commission and the North Sea Region Programme each year arrange a joint conference, incorporating the NSC General Assembly. In 2007, this was held in Brunstad, Norway, on the 20-22 of June. The theme of the conference was: “Transnational Cooperation across the North Sea – Creating a Sustainable and Competitive Region for the Future”, focussing on the challenges posed by the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas for the North Sea Region. The 500 participants took part in a programme, which featured representatives from the Norwegian Government, the European Commission as well as the private sector and educational institutions. During the event the new Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme, 2007-2013 was formally launched.

The NSC General Assembly on 22 June, passed unanimously Resolutions and Political Statements on the following issues: The EU Paper - Maritime Policy Green Paper, Activities based on maritime policy, Illegal Unregulated Unreported Fishing Activities and Permanent removal of Mercury from U864 outside Norway. [More](#)

The Regional Council for Western Norway

The Regional Council for Western Norway is an organization for co-operation consisting of 4 County Councils on the western coast of Norway: Møre og Romsdal, Sogn og Fjordane, Hordaland and Rogaland. The council consists of 20 members; 5 politicians elected from each of the county councils. The action plan for the council consists of four parts; international

affairs, culture, business development and innovation and transport. Administrative groups have been established for each of these fields.

In a meeting in Kristiansund on December 5th, the council passed a resolution stating that they aimed to be a strong political actor in the North Sea Region. Closer cooperation may be possible in the following fields: marine resources, environmental questions, safe maritime transport, effective use of the coast's resource potential, innovation, common cultural history and identity and health promotion and preventive work. In 2008, Hordaland will, by rotation, take over the leadership of the council. [More](#)

Courses and Conferences

[Open Days Brussel](#)

Between October 8 and 11, EU's Committee of the Regions hosted for the fifth time "*OPEN DAYS - European Week of Regions and Cities*". During this period, approximately 5000 participants from more than 100 regions, cities or other institutions get the chance to participate in more than 150 different workshops. This year's headline was: "Making it happen: regions deliver growth and jobs" and the programme will be built around five sub-headlines:

- (1) Attracting investors: Regions and cities show how it works;
- (2) Proximity matters: Clusters and regional development;
- (3) Spending it wisely: Public-private partnerships and financial engineering;
- (4) Crossing borders: Networking and best practice supporting growth and jobs;
- (5) Checking delivery: How the new programmes are implemented



Closing session in the hemicycle of the European Parliament

[Maritime Conference in Ålesund \(Open Days Norway\)](#)

On 10 October 2007, the European Commission presented its vision for an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union - the Blue Book. On 18 October the West Norway Office in Brussels hosted a seminar in Ålesund, which focused on EU's maritime policies, including environmental protection, fisheries and maritime transport - all are important areas for the west coast. There was also a presentation of EU projects where the region was active, as well as a presentation of the 7th Framework programme. This seminar was organised

under the heading "Open Days going local" – and linked to the centralised events in Brussels.

[Information meeting on LLP](#)

On October 29, Hordaland County Council, together with SIU, arranged a full day information meeting on EU's new Lifelong Learning Program – LLP. The meeting joined together the county council's annual meeting on Leonardo and SIU's national tour of information meetings on the LLP program. The event attracted representatives from a variety of sectors, from education to business. In addition to general information on the program, the meeting also offered parallel sessions with more in-depth information on the sector programs Comenius, Leonardo and Grundtvig. [More](#)

[Leonardo da Vinci project leader seminar](#)

On November 1 and 2, SIU arranged a national seminar for new and experienced coordinators of Leonardo projects. On this seminar, Thore Thomassen from the European Office of the County Council gave a presentation on the region's experiences with the mobility projects under Leonardo da Vinci, as well as its predecessor COMETT. The Deputy County Major, Tom Christer Nilsen also gave a presentation "Intercultural understanding – the requirement of a good partnership" [More](#)

West Norway Office in Brussels

The West Norway Office represents the county councils in Hordaland, Sogn & Fjordane and Møre & Romsdal, as well as several of their municipalities in Brussels. In 2008 there have been numerous opportunities to network with some of the 250 other regional offices in Brussels. For the participation in the "Open Days" the office was collaborating with regions from Poland, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France and Norway. Together these regions created the conglomerate "Deep Blue: Innovative Maritime Regions", and organized two seminars showcasing best practices from their respective regions. The region was also promoted through the stand in the exhibition called "Investors Café".

This was the third time that West-Norway was a partner in Open Days, and they used the opportunity to showcase the following two examples from the region; The EU project called "MAGALOG", where Hordaland is a project partner focuses on alternative fuel solutions in maritime transport. It was showed how the Magalog project aims to multiply environmentally friendly fuel for ships by investigating where and how gas supply chains can be established. The project is especially directed at port cities in the Baltic Sea, and is a co-operation between several partners from Germany, Poland and Western Norway. In the second seminar a maritime cluster close to Ålesund, which has a world leading position in its field, was presented. It has its origins in fishing fleets that over the years were forced to

adapt to different markets. Currently the cluster is strongly linked to offshore shipping activities.

On October 12th, directly following the OPEN DAYS, the West Norway Office hosted a seminar on EU matters for participants from Bergen, Hordaland and Møre og Romsdal. This seminar presented updates on the EU policies in fields such as business, health, environment and urban development.

In addition to following on the maritime affairs, the West Norway Office is updating the region on issues like, energy, environment, cohesion policy and the EU programmes that are of special interest to the region. The region has also assisted in partner search for project initiatives from the home region. Every year the office receives a number of groups for study visits to build competence on EU. The groups that were received during the autumn 2007 mostly represented public sector - both politicians and members of the administration.

Other activities

International Week

From October 19 to 27 an "International Week" was arranged in Bergen, for the fourth time running. Through a diverse set of events and activities the organizers wished to create an increased interest, understanding and engagement for international development questions in general and the UN millennium goals in particular. The Bergen branch of the United Nations Association of Norway was the responsible organisation behind these events, but they had received assistance from other organisations, like Bergen Kommune, Hordaland Fylkeskommune, Utdanning i Bergen, BIKS etc. The different events gave a variety of different approaches to the main theme and many of them were well visited by the public (in addition to receiving good coverage in the press). [More](#)



The County Musicians visit Shanghai

Three of the "county musicians" played in Shanghai in China in November, as part of Rikskonsertene's international activities. The Sino-Norwegian Music week for Youth (5-11/11.) was part of the China Shanghai International Arts Festival which every year draws more than 1,2 million spectators. The trio, which consists of Geir Botnen (piano), Rhoda Achieng Ondeng (vocals) and Kristina Ebbersten (violin), held 9 school concerts in the Shanghai area. Including the regular concerts, they would, over the course of the week have played 39 concerts for over 12.00 spectators all together. The program for the school concerts was a half hour introduction to the life and music of Edvard Grieg, giving the Chinese children too, the opportunity to dance to "Dovregubbens hall"

County Musicians to Guatemala

The County Musicians Reidun Horvei, Frank Henrik Rolland and Einar Mjølunes participated in the friendship project Stord-Comalapa's music exchange program from September 29 to October 14. Comalapa is Stord's friendship city and the organisation "Friendship Stord-Comalapa" has organised different activities since 1996 and it has grown to include the music scene in Guatemala City. Reidun Horvei (vocals) describes it as a wonderful experience to cooperate with the Guatemalan people on the musical level and to get an insight that it is impossible to get as a musician. *"We would like to thank Stord municipality, represented by Åge Vallestad and Torger Tvedten for choosing the county musicians from Hordaland to come with them, together with the two musicians and pedagogs from Stord; Solveig Husebø (violin) and Omar Zahl Pettersen (piano)."*

In their report they write: *"Our experience from this trip is first and foremost the pleasure of having conveyed our message, in a musical and pedagogical sense, and also an understanding of the Guatemalan national instrument, the marimba, and other musical expressions that was presented to us"*. Now their hope is that it will be possible to arrange a visit by a Guatemalan marimba orchestra to Hordaland, for example for a tour of school concerts. [More](#)



Omar Zahl Pettersen from Stord Cultural School at a local school in Sololá. (Photo: Reidun Horvei)

House in Covarrubias, Spain

Covarrubias is a small village in the Burgos province in northern Spain. The fact that the Norwegian-born princess Kristina's grave is in Covarrubias forms the basis of the village's ties to Norway. They even have a Norwegian music and art festival "Notas de Noruega" every fall. Covarrubias City Council has provided a small house for the "Princess Kristina Foundation" to be used as a refuge for Norwegian artists. Hordaland County Council has granted means to upgrade the house to an adequate standard. In the time to come, Hordaland County Council and the Kristina foundation will establish the guidelines for a cultural exchange between Covarrubias and Hordaland.