GB Session Report
Trondheim & Røros 2017

Report by the Governing Body on the 84th International Session of the European Youth Parliament
INTRODUCTION

This is the Governing Body’s report on the 84th International Session of the European Youth Parliament in Røros and Trondheim. Main authors were Ioanna Yiallourides and Lars-Erik Nyborg, members of the Governing Body, who were the representatives of the Governing Body at the session.

The purpose of this report is to review the successes of the session itself, identify potential areas for improvement or consideration at future International Sessions and point out areas for discussion within the EYP community. The Governing Body is convinced that International Sessions serve a strong purpose for our organisation, as they are the only events, which aim to bring together participants from all the countries where the EYP is present, offering a chance to foster cohesion and cooperation within the network. As our flagship events, International Sessions highlight our work to partners and our position in European civil society.

The report is structured as follows:

I. Remarks

II. Discussion

III. Conclusion
R E M A R K S

The following points are to be seen as learning points and suggestions for NOCs, Governing Body members and staff of the International Office for future International Sessions and not necessarily as a criticism of the actors involved, but often the result of unfavourable external circumstances.

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Successes and best practices</th>
<th>Areas for further improvement</th>
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<td>Practical</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Registration Process</td>
<td>There was a very good plan for a welcome dinner when delegations were arriving. Having warm food with flexible timing cheered many delegates after a long journey. It was also thoughtful that there was also food planned for late arrivals.</td>
<td>The check-in process could have been a bit smoother. Organisers were not fully aware of the process and of relevant information they had to share with participants during registration. It is important to note that this was the very beginning of the session, but for future sessions it will be useful to ensure that the check in process runs smoothly.</td>
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- **Venues**

**Røros:** The accommodation was of really high quality for all participants. The hotel also provided rooms which were very suitable for general teambuilding, Eurovillage and for the teachers programme. A Norwegian evening took place at Røros’ church which was ideal.

**Trondheim:** Accommodation in Trondheim was of equally high quality. Committee Work and GA venues were located at the University of Trondheim, and while the CW was scattered around a big area and the GA had to change between two auditoriums, it was close to the accommodation, therefore transfers were easy and on foot. Due to the adverse weather conditions, part of the TB had to be moved indoors. Unfortunately there were not enough rooms available, leaving a few committees without a quality location which caused some problems. An IS TB plan would preferably include sufficient indoor spaces for quality TB when necessary. While the University of Trondheim provided great communal facilities for coffee breaks, some classrooms used for committee work were quite small and were scattered far away from each other in different buildings and departments which caused some organisational complexities. Euroconcert took place in an appropriate theatre, however, the venue was not suitable at all for dinner since there was only a narrow corridor for all 300 participants to get food and no seating for more than 20 participants. In future, the scale of the session should be taken into account when finding appropriate venues.

- **Accommodation**

Accommodation venues were excellent. The quality of the rooms and facilities provided an ideal setting for participants.

- **Catering**

Breakfasts at both hotels was impressive and offered numerous opportunities for all tastes. The meals at the Røros hotel were delicious and plentiful. Offering participants a traditional Norwegian dinner (during the Norwegian evening) was an excellent and very tasty idea, also allowing participants to learn more about Norwegian culture through its cuisine. The food also catered to all dietary requirements throughout the session. The food was overall very good and nutritious. However, it is important to note that when serving sandwiches for lunch it would be useful to ensure that there is enough food.
Participants were given dietary requirement cards which they could share with catering at each respective location in order to get the appropriate meal was an excellent idea.

<p>| Transfers | Transfers from Røros-Trondheim were handled very well. Most transfers in Trondheim were on foot. It is a great advantage, both financially and environmentally, when most venues are in walking range. This way the participants also get the opportunity to see more of the country and city where the session takes place. | The CMO training took place in Trondheim, therefore these teams had to transfer to Røros the next day for the beginning of the session and then returned to Trondheim for CW/GA. It would be preferable to avoid extra transfers, especially as the transfer reduced the CMO training time. In Røros the weather was a challenge for some participants with cold temperatures and blizzards. Participants had to walk for over 10-20 minutes at a time during transfers to the school for CW which, for some, was not ideal. This was a part of experiencing nordic weather though. As regards the session transfer, ideally this would happen after Teambuilding and not after the first day of CW. It would be ideal for committees to have their entire committee work in one room. It also makes the transfer interfere less with the smooth process of the session if it happens after the end of a phase, rather than after the 2nd one has started. |
| Session Medic | Marit, one of the HOs, served as the session medic since she is a medical student. She also gave a training workshop to all officials on how to deal with emergency situations. | |
| Alcohol Policy | The Alcohol policy was respected to a very high standard. It is worth noting that due to the fact that in Røros participants were only in the hotel and prices were high, it also discouraged delegates from not respecting the policy. Not one breach of the alcohol |</p>
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<td>- <strong>Teambuilding</strong></td>
<td>General Teambuilding was full of energy and enthusiasm and marked a great start to committee TB. The chairs and delegates conducted their TB in Røros and due to the adverse weather conditions there were some complications to initial plans, but the team managed to respond to the situation and ensure a worthwhile and constructive team building day both in the snow and in the facilities provided in the hotel. It is recommended that in places with unpredictable climate, there is a contingency plan for such an occasion.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Eurovillage</strong></td>
<td>The Eurovillage venue was great for its purpose. There was more than enough food, but the organisers also provided traditional savoury food, just in case there wasn’t enough. This was a great idea and ensured that people were happy with the meal. There was also a great sustainability initiative whereby the organisers provided biodegradable plates and there was also a recycling initiative with organisers guiding participants and ensuring recycling as much as possible to minimise food waste. There was also a very good observation of the alcohol policy.</td>
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<td>- <strong>Opening Ceremony</strong></td>
<td>It was convenient to have the event in the evening, rather than morning, gaining more time for CW. It was also great that it took place so close to the accommodation. It was also a good idea to have all participants seated at round dinner tables for food, but the opening ceremony speeches immediately opening Ceremony took place half-way through the session, perhaps a bit late during the session. Ideally, actors involved in the process of developing the OC programme, would consider the order of speakers and ideally content to ensure the most appropriate order.</td>
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**Policy** was registered.
Committee Work

The venue, the University of Trondheim, was in walking distance from the accommodation. This saved time for CW. While the University of Trondheim provided great communal facilities for coffee breaks, some class rooms used for committee work were rather small and were scattered quite far away from each other in different buildings and departments, which made it difficult and caused some organisational complexities.

Cultural Programme

The cultural programme of the session was exceptional. The H.Os clearly outlined their vision of showcasing Norwegian culture to participants and this was successfully embedded in several dimensions of the session.

A great example was the Norwegian evening. The programme included Røros locals presenting traditions, teaching participants folk songs (both Norwegian and indigenous), the participants learned about Norwegian history and humour and had a 3 course Norwegian meal. This was a great showcase of this intention.

On Thursday there was plenty of time to see the city of Trondheim, but many delegates used the opportunity to get some rest. Some teachers took their delegates on a tour in the city center, but it may be an idea to have a sightseeing event planned for this day.

Euroconcert

For the first time there was an open call for presenters of EuroConcert, also open for delegates. The selected presenters consisted of one member of every team at the session, which delivered a great point of unity and lowering barriers. The process of an open call is also more transparent and fair rather than session leadership appointing certain individuals they think might do best. EuroConcert also saw probably the first presenter in drag - this was a strong message for any young participant dealing with perhaps

The transfer for Euroconcert presented some logistical problems, with half of a group having to wait in the rain for quite some time. Similarly, there were too long queues for dinner, and a lack of tables to eat on. It was a good venue for Euroconcert, but not for dinner.
insecurities about oneself, to embrace them and to be true to themselves, even in front of 300 people.

### General Assembly

Although the GA had to move from one auditorium to another, the venues created a good atmosphere for the debate giving the committees enough space around them. There were several amendments to the GA procedure quite new to GAs at International Sessions, and they worked very well.

The board had an approach of encouraging and supporting delegates, rather than adding pressure to the exercise. This was reported by delegate rapporteurs and teachers to have contributed to making them feel more reassured and encouraged to take the floor.

It is ideal not to change the venue three times. Preferably, coffee breaks should be close to the GA room and not in another building. The board had a tall table and no chairs to sit on for the first debates in a new room. It is important to give the board a good working space.

### Teachers’ Programme

The Teachers’ Programme was very well planned and executed. It included visits to the copper mine at Røros, other local museums and gave the teachers and chaperones plenty of time to socialise and learn more about Norwegian history and society. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn about history, society and culture of the host country.

Once again the experience was that it is really useful to have at least one designated organiser for the group of teachers.

There was also sufficient flexibility in the programme, allowing teachers to either participate or choose to spend their time differently.

There was a teacher rapporteur who joined other rapporteurs in meetings with officials. Read more on this in the discussion in the end of the report.

### Farewell Party

The venue was a remote skiing lodge which made a great frame for the
farewell party. The food was very good. The venue had a remote location, but transfers worked fine. It was a very nice farewell party.

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<th>Academic Quality</th>
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<td><strong>- Ideas Village</strong></td>
<td>This event mirrored a EuroVillage, but instead of delegations presenting foods, committees presented their initial ideas on their topics. Committee rapporteurs indicated it assisted delegates to better understand other topics and to go to GA with a better idea of what each approach and rationale was.</td>
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<td>Due to the fact that the Opening Ceremony started later, the Idea Village was shorter than expected as participants had to leave the venue. As this was not well communicated, the evening was brought to an abrupt end, leaving no time for wrap up. Committee rapporteurs indicated they would have preferred for the evening to be a bit longer.</td>
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<td><strong>- World Cafe</strong></td>
<td>There was a rather developed program and concept for the World Café, with several interesting talks prepared that would have offered delegates a wider range of topics to think about and discuss.</td>
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<td>Unfortunately, for different logistical reasons, there was only one talk that was given, differing from the plan, putting those who had prepared their talks in an unpleasant situation. The concept also lost the dynamism and energy because there was one long speech rather than several shorter more engaging ones. Reflecting back on this, it would have been better to have left a free evening rather than pushing for something which was not planned or executed well since this left both delegates and speakers who had prepared in an uncomfortable situation.</td>
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<td><strong>- General Assembly Amendments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reaction cards.</strong> Every delegate had a green and a red reaction card they could raise at any point during the debate to show support or disagreement with the ideas expressed. This greatly contributed to more involvement of delegates in all debates. The material the reaction cards are made of (A5 pieces of paper, red and green), should be made from a material that does not make too much sound when shaken in the air.</td>
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<td><strong>Two direct responses per debate:</strong> This can be a good change in the policy, because of the enhanced involvement of all delegates, however two direct responses per committee proved to be too much considering all the other changes in policies that had increased the involvement of delegates in debates, making it difficult to take all direct responses raised during each debate.</td>
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**Structuring the operative clauses in**
### sections

The structure of resolutions was based on how ideas should be debated (3 rounds of debates, one per section in the resolution, and a fourth one open to all points). This contributed to a more focused debate and ensured that the full extent of a resolution was debated. The fourth round was important to enable committees that did not manage to get their points across in previous sections to get back to them.

**Amendments** by other committees during the first three rounds of the debate. This was perhaps what made the biggest difference. It enabled the atmosphere of GA to truly stay constructive, giving it a sense of collaborative learning focused on reaching a solution, rather than a debating competition. With very few exceptions, committees submitted constructive suggestions for amendments to the resolutions during the debate, which were often accepted by the proposing committee and the jointly polished motion put to the vote of the assembly.

### Resolution Typing

The board decided not to put strict times or deadlines, nor pressure on chairs throughout resolution typing. This meant that the typing lasted until late in the night, but most chairs indicated they preferred it this way, rather than being pressed and pressured.

Language check was outsourced through a call launched before the session. It was very useful to have one person outside the session, coordinating native speakers to enable the board not be distracted or lose time due to changes in program or preferences on topics on the side of native checks. A big thank you to the contributors of the language check.

Unfortunately, the WiFi dropped around midnight. While the organisers set up hot spots and solved the problem, for future sessions a stable internet connection should be ensured, including a backup solution.
## External Guests

External guests that attended as session experts were a great addition to committee work. Some guests were very helpful and invested in the committees they were asked to contribute to and even attended full days of committee work, which was a welcome addition.

## Finances

The Head Organisers experienced major challenges in funding the session. In Norway public funding is the most common funding possibility, but it was difficult to get grants more than a few months ahead of the event. Because of huge funding problems, the green light was not given from the GB until January 2017, and the green light was conditioned on some budget cuts, such as a decreased size of the media team, chairing VPs.

After all, thanks to the last-minute contribution from the German Foreign Office and Norwegian Ministry of Education - the ideal budget was achieved, and the financial challenges were not reflected during the session, however it did affect the stress level of the organising team prior to the session and them not being able to focus on some session-related aspects, because of continuous fundraising efforts.

## Leadership

- **Head Organisers**

  The Head Organisers of the session, Lars Kristian Selbekk, Marit Huseby and Frida Konstad had a great vision which they tried to reflect in every dimension of the session from recycling and sustainability initiatives to representing Norwegian culture and traditions. They were very successful in doing this. The three HOs worked very well together and this reflected both on their team and the session participants. It was also impressive to see the three of them
cooperate so well, taking into account that both Marit and Frida had full-time jobs throughout working on the project. They really invested their lives in this project and truly valued the opportunity to share with the EYP participants what Norway has to offer. They paid attention to every detail and crafted a unique experience for all the participants.

- **President**

  Maria Manolescu was an excellent President for this session. She invested a lot of time and thought in both the planning and execution of the work of her team, the overall academic quality of the session as well as creating a very creative, empowering and educational experience for all participants. Her drive and motivation to add innovative ideas to improve some session elements such as introducing amendments to the GA to increase participation as well as widening the scope of institutional tools for participants to encourage a global view were great additions to the session. Maria was also an exceptional speaker, who conveyed both the vision and aims of EYP very successfully throughout the session. She also acted as a great role-model for participants and her teams. She took challenges in her stride and handled difficult situations with professionalism and worked very well with the rest of the leadership team to deliver a great quality session. She has also had an open call for trainers, both for the CAT and the session, which was a welcomed approach, offering more people the opportunity to apply, it was of great value to learn from Maria’s inclusive approach.

- **Editor**

  Fotis managed really well with a small team. There was excellent photographic output from the session. However, there were several projects
being conducted in parallel and the priorities were not ideally aligned. When having such a small team it would be a good idea to prioritise essentials, like uploading the pictures etc. Nevertheless, the team was well structured, had a strong presence, had a good team dynamic and produced some good projects.

### Official's Teams

- **Organising Team**

  An innovative concept for this session was allowing organisers to attend only parts of the session as organisers, therefore giving the opportunity to Norwegian alumni who could not commit to the full event due to other obligations to still contribute, learn about organising and be part of the session. While this had its downfalls, it also inspired and trained even more EYPers which could in the future take on a similar project.

  Having a larger team than typical in EYP ISes was one of the aims of the H.Os in order to ensure that individuals had sufficient time to work, rest but also enjoy the experience.

  Another dimension which was noteworthy is that selection criteria for organizers were not too strict. The rationale behind this was to ensure that newer members of EYP, who did not necessarily have extensive EYP experience would have the opportunity to contribute to a large scale event. This also applied to two Icelandic organizers who were part of the team.

  The organisers worked hard to create a great event. They were smiling and flexible all the time.

- **Chairs’ Team**

  Besides performing at the high level expected of an IS chairs’ team, the individuals on the chairs’ team are to

  For financial reasons, the VPs had to also chair. This proved to have several negative consequences -

  The H.Os opted for a flat hierarchy, whereby organisers were not responsible for a single project, but supported across various ones. This resulted sometimes in lack of information and confusion at parts, since not having someone ‘in charge’ of a part meant that they were always looking to session leadership. This could cause delays, confusion or wrong information given.

  However, this was also a great way to empower and challenge organisers to develop leadership skills which could be useful to any future IS planning in Norway.
be lauded for embarking on a project that required more time and effort than an average IS, with chairs (and officials) involved in identifying areas of a session that could benefit of improvement and taking ownership in developing it further. All the processes and concepts developed for the session and for delegates were designed with the active involvement of the chairs.

- Media Team

It was great that the media team posted photos during the session rather soon after the events had been taking place, allowing more presence online, and also allowing teachers to see what their delegates are doing. This was very well received.

Unfortunately the media team did not produce a lot of content prior to the session. During the session, they had some interesting projects that could have had a better impact or reach out to more participants with a clearer message and better communication.

- Trainers

For the first time in an IS, there were open calls for trainers, indicating clearly the needs and role of a trainer both for CAT and the session. Having two calls for both events allowed to select different individuals willing to provide their different skills where they both fit best for the team.

The trainer in CAT was also brought on to bring insight to the leadership team; he also led discussions between leadership team members allowing them to discuss reactions to potential problems, all very constructive and helpful.

The trainers were Sebastian Hojas (AU) for CAT and Jan Bubienczyk (FI) for the first days of the session.

The call for a trainer before the session was sent out rather late, due to insecurity over whether the budget could allow for it. It would be ideal to have the trainer set as early as possible, to work with the board and leadership on planning the training.

- Evaluations

The NC, President and H.Os submitted all their evaluations. The Editor has submitted all evaluations but one to date and one member of the Chairs team did not submit any evaluations.

It is ideal that all participants would receive an evaluation.

Session Theme

The session had a clearly defined and articulated vision and it was clear that it was developed progressively with everyone involved. After the NOC shared their vision (in the call for
president), the session leadership team discussed and produced a more detailed version. This was used for the call for chairs. Having questions aimed at allowing the panel to understand applicant’s position and understanding towards a vision, as well as the panel’s commitment to select those applicants that were committed to it, ensured a cohesive team in terms of personal and group goals. This would be a useful approach in future sessions to ensure alignment between applicants and the selection panels.

Once the team was selected, the vision as it was, was opened up to discussion. A survey was also carried out to assess input and position on vision, among others. Furthermore, the vision was then ‘deconstructed’ to make the concepts and objectives more clear and concrete.

This was later on also shared with delegates, and again, opened up for discussion with them. The objective was always to have the vision shaped together.

The process allowed for ownership of participants of the vision, and most importantly ensured everyone was on the same page. The delegates noted, during Committee Rapporteur meetings seeing the vision come to life and understanding that the chairs and officials were implementing what they had shared as their vision.

It was also helpful when the session vision was presented and discussed by the President with the teachers. This was also appreciated and enabled teachers to feel more integrated in the
Discussion:

Academic Concept

The NOC and HOs had a clear position regarding topics, namely that they should not be EU focused as EYP is neither. There was a further desire to ensure that topics are related to issues prevalent or of importance in Norway, e.g. fishery, indigenous people, so as to indirectly offer delegates an opportunity to discover and learn more about the host country. It was very helpful for the HOs to have such a clear approach. Lars Kristian (HO) was very passionate and committed to contributing to the development of topics and had a few ideas already before the president was selected.

Officials agreed that the aim of the academic concept for the session was to provide delegates with a true learning experience. To do so, they tweaked and paid special attention to ensuring, that the atmosphere was one aimed at facilitating learning - it was supporting delegates, rather than pressuring them. This translated into firstly needs based approaches from the chairs, acting based on what individual delegates needed to perform. Furthermore, the atmosphere in GA was more relaxed and focused on encouraging delegates to take the opportunity to discuss ideas, rather than perform at a high intense debating competition.

This guided the changes to the GA procedure mentioned above. Delegates mentioned during the GA Committee Rapporteurs meeting appreciating such an approach, and feeling more relaxed about an already stressful experience (standing up to speak in front of 300 people is already enough pressure for a 16 year old).

This also led to tips and tricks in the Academic PrepKit on how delegates should research, as well as how to make use of legislation. Teachers found it very useful for their delegates, and we believe this should definitely be considered for future prep kits.

Committee and Team Rapporteurs

Every committee chose a delegate that would represent the delegates - he/she would gather input and insights to share at the meeting with team rapporteurs, and then explain and share the discussions with fellow delegates. One of the vice-presidents coordinated meetings among committee rapporteurs, with one HO, the editor and one teacher present. The aim of the discussions was to enable the session leadership to continuously assess needs of participants, have an understanding of what is going well and what needs to be worked on based on direct input from the participants, rather than through assumptions. These meetings also allowed for a more informal and direct dialogue between session leadership and delegates, with freedom to exchange insights, as well as to ask questions about why certain events or approaches were done in a certain way or another. This further contributed to lowering the barriers between 'officials' and delegates, increasing transparency of the work of the former.

The meetings were very highly rated by both team leaders, the teacher representative and delegate rapporteurs. The latter appreciated being asked what they needed and how they were experiencing the session, and seeing their input being taken into account and acted on. Teachers further appreciated attending the meeting, as it allowed them to get more of an overview of the project, as well as a possibility to be consulted and to shape the overall project.

Cultural Programme
In addition to team building, committee work and the GA, the cultural programme will most likely become the fourth core element of an International Session’s programme in 2017. An important part of the discussion leading to this is the fact that delegates and officials are travelling across Europe to attend an International Session, and it is very sad if they go back without any knowledge of the host country and city. Having a cultural programme is also closely connected to the intercultural value of the EYP. We want participants to get to know the culture, history and politics of the host country.

At Trondheim/Røros the cultural programme played an important role. Already during teambuilding, the delegates got to know local culture through both the location of the session, Røros, which is a UNESCO Heritage town and participants were immersed in local culture. The Norwegian evening which included local food, performances and anecdotes from locals was a fantastic way to incorporate cultural elements within a session programme. This was a huge success and well received amongst the participants.

The Cultural programme is also educational as it immerses participants within a local culture, allowing the organisers to present their home country and culture. This is an important tool to create understanding across borders and cultures, and the GB sees it as an essential part of our mission in the EYP. Most of the cultural programme took place while the session was at Røros, and this was smart because of the special historic character of this remote village and because of the other programme spots here. Nevertheless, the Norwegian touch of the session was present throughout the week.

The GB wants to point out that the Cultural Programme creates funding possibilities to explore for the organising team. Tourist offices and other authorities connected to tourism may be willing to support the session when the participants are presented to local culture. This was the case in Trondheim/Røros, and other organising teams have experienced the same thing. The GB is very happy seeing that the increased focus on the cultural programme seems to be a success.

Financial situation

Ahead of the International Session in Trondheim and Røros, there were some funding problems. The major obstacle for the TR017 organisers was managing to secure grants and binding agreements well in time for the session. Several of the main public contributors did not grant money for events taking place the next year, even though the relationship with those funders in the previous years was very reliable, so it was a big challenge that had not been anticipated. There is something to learn from how to cope with the lack of finances, and Trondheim was a good example of it.

While it is difficult to make cuts for the session, there is a need to establish clear priorities for the session and make necessary cuts ahead of time in order to ensure International Sessions can still happen and run smoothly.

First of all, it is recommendable to see where the major money can be saved and make it a proportional change. In the past, there were the following cuts made: decreasing a number of participants (delegates - have to be agreed a few months in advance; VPs - have non-chairing VPs; smaller media team etc.); to cut evening programme and have free evenings instead, to cut the mobility fund, decrease the quality of a few meals etc. You should keep in mind the well-being of the participants and the quality of the session.
CONCLUSION

Overall, the session was a great success and received excellent feedback from participants and teachers alike. We would like to highlight that this report only serves as constructive feedback and aims to provide learning points for subsequent International Sessions.

We would once again like to reiterate our gratitude to the Head Organisers Lars Kristian, Marit and Frida for putting together such a memorable International Session which reflected Norwegian heritage and culture in such a unique way. We look forward to the next International Session to be hosted in Norway.