

Stipendiatororganisasjonene i Norge

Quarterly meeting with the local organizations
28.02.2022

Time: 18:00

Location: Zoom

Agenda

1. Introductions (15 min)
2. Scheduling future meetings (15 min)
3. Communication platform (15 min)
 - a. Teams
 - b. Slack (We in the board recommend Slack)
 - c. Facebook
 - d. Other?
4. Internationalization and Discussion (30 min)
 - a. Statement
 - b. Feedback
5. PhD Day (30 min)
6. Additional discussion from local organizations (30 min)

Minutes

Present: Nicolas, Sanja, Johanne, Chris, Siamak, Anna, Andrea, Yauhan – a bit late, **Runa (UiBDoc)**, **Rujuta (NHHdoc)**, **Martin (DION)**, **Elian (OsloMet)**, **Koen (TODOS)**, **Bindiya (UiS)** - left half time

1. Introductions

Presenting each other

2. Scheduling future meetings

Announcing the next meetings for this semester.

3. Communication platform

As Teams faced several challenges, in addition to the highly problematic access when hosted by one university, the SiN board suggests Slack. The member organizations comment mostly in favour of Slack, with the additional comment that e-mails should be used as the most important channel for key information. Still, it is good to have a less formal channel for every-day communication.

4. Internationalization and Discussion

We also had discussions at the AGM in relation to internationalization, and Nicolas asks for feedback.

The member organizations provided the following feedback:

- The language should be adjusted (currently it provides the impression of international researchers being “the best”). It is a bit one-sided. It should be more widely recognized that internationalization goes both ways. Also, at the UiS internationalization event, two-sidedness was raised as one of the key points.
- It would be good to recognize the existence of a debate in the statement. The reason behind is that this topic is more controversial than other SiN statements.
- ___The last paragraph should be shortened.
- ___As internationalization is a hot topic, there is also an option to wait and write a good document.

Nicolas explains that the idea behind the document was not to start a debate, but rather to show our position as a group, and therefore it is not raising all the points. The plan was that details could be provided upon questions. We are also expecting the plan, so we should take it into account for the future. The suggestion following the discussion is to ask the member organizations to provide coherent, written feedback, which can then be integrated into the final draft before posting it on the web page. It would be good to try to merge both perspectives in this final draft, and the SiN board is looking forward to receiving this feedback since SiN represents all students, both international and Norwegian.

Nicolas asks for written feedback on the internationalization statement from the local organizations to be sent in the next two weeks. The document will be translated into

Norwegian as well. The final pipeline for the document would be to get feedback and post it, hopefully before April.

5. PhD Day

<https://www.forskningsdagene.no/> will last from September 21 to October 2, and on one day we from SiN want to have some events particularly relevant for PhDs and postdocs. We will aim for a hybrid version, a full day event, and PhDs and postdocs will choose which ones they would like to attend. Possible topics could be:

- Internationalization is a hot topic, and it would be interesting to have a debate, inviting people from both sides.
- Unions, which would be an interesting topic, especially for Internationals as many do not know what to expect when arriving in Norway.
- The life of the PhD, which would highlight the career opportunities both in and out of academia. People would be invited from both different organizations and academia.

Place: Oslo

The plan is to contact local institutions who could help with the organization, and to contact Forskningsdagene. The idea is to represent all PhDs and postdocs on this day. The goal is to have an engaging and interesting program, but also to mingle and not only to run from one event to the other. Perhaps a stand-up comedian or some entertainers could be included.

Feedback from the member organizations, asking whether they have any speakers in mind, some institutions or experience, and how to cover travel and accommodation expenses.

The comments are the following:

- TODOS says they can market the event.
- The difficulty of travelling from e.g. Tromsø or Trondheim only for the PhD day is a key challenge.
- For motivation it is always good to have something with music, as people are hungry for physical social events. Food is another good reason to attend.
- Also, perhaps in a hybrid form as a decentralized event, with the main event in Oslo and separate events in other institutions. This, once again, may pose a challenge in streaming, and make people less likely to attend in person. Otherwise, local organizations could have an organized stream of the event with some snacks.
- Next time, the biggest event should be in a different place.
- It depends on how much effort the local organizations are willing to put into the event organization and support, as their help would be crucial.
- OsloMet organizes their own PhD day, which they have funds for in September. so it would be good to talk further about it. As soon as the election has passed, Elian will put us all in touch with the new leader.
- It is important to announce the event early in advance, since in that case, people can combine it with, for instance, some other meetings.

Anna explains that the document in the written form will be sent to all the organizations, and comments should be sent within one month.

6. Additional

a. COVID-19 survey

Nicolas explains that the survey will be sent out within 10 working days to the member organizations. After that, it should be forwarded to the members, and local organizations should encourage people to take part in it. It is a good point to collect data, and to have information on how much people are on average late, to inform the ministry on that.

The feedback from the local organizations:

- Can there be data included on the university? (it will be)
- Were the previous results published, and why were there not more inputs from SiN on that one (like Camilla with the article in Khrono)? (They were published, and Andrea puts the results in the chat, and explains that Khrono also used the previous results)
- We should keep in mind that some schools are very small, such as NHH (in relation to the response rate).
- SiN should have an active role in this debate.
- Help from local organizations in distributing and motivating their members to take part in the survey is very much needed.

The previous survey:

<https://stipendiat.no/documents-2/resolutions/#pandemic>

<https://stipendiat.no/documents-2/external/>

b. Russia – Ukraine

Nicolas is showing the Sin's statement and asks for feedback. The idea is to roll it out in the next few days. For the time being, cooperation with Russians and Belarus remains intact, but we must be prepared if all ties with their academic communities are cut off. Also, our Danish equivalent had a point in not cutting off all the ties.

Our position statement will be translated to Norwegian.

<https://khrono.no/krigen-vil-fa-folger-for-samarbeidet-med-rusland/665733>

The feedback from the member organizations:

- despite universities' nurturing of democratic thoughts, things are changing very fast.
- There is a need for psychological help for students from Ukraine (EuroDoc will have some initiatives).
- The universities are definitely thinking about students in Ukraine and Russia, there were discussions at the universities to take care of that.
- According to some local insights, some universities are oppressive towards students, putting a lot of pressure, where deans and rectors actually keep up with the oppressive politics in the country. This makes the cooperation difficult.
- On the other hand, in being against cutting ties with the academics, we could make a distinction between keeping in touch through direct communication with researchers and not institutions on the side of the regime. Sanctions cause harm to ordinary people.
- Cutting ties completely would inevitably affect Norwegian research, and as well as Russian and Belarus research.
- A suggestion is to change terminology, perhaps "academic environment" or "academic communities" or "colleagues"
- If Norwegian government changes its position, we will have to think about what to do, and how to formulate.

- UHR published their own statement, having the position that cutting ties would be very unfortunate. Even if we release our statement before the government, we can address the fact that we are in line with UHR, which is a very important body of government.

As the aim is to publish the statement as fast as possible, we will not be awaiting further feedback from the member organizations. All the comments provided are taken into account.

c. Teaching duties and compensations for PhDs

Teaching duty is not regulated enough across faculties and universities, some teach, some do not, some less, some more. At NTNU fewer and fewer PhDs are getting teaching duties. At NHH it varies from department to department. At UiT it is different between the faculties. At UiT there also was a debate that some departments decided to leave the one year of teaching if you finished on time the remaining three years. Different universities have different policies in terms of the length of PhD work, and teaching duties. Some have 3 years, others 4 years. Also, it puts students on two different levels, as some of them are getting disadvantaged for not teaching. Additionally, some students speak Norwegian, and some do not which unevenly shares the working load. Compensations are different in different schools and vary widely. Some people are not paid for their duty work. On the other hand, it would not be practical to standardize teaching across Norway. It is something to bring to the unions, since it is easiest to do locally.

Still all PhDs should take a course in pedagogy. SiN should have a look at pedagogical courses.

Rather than a survey it would be good to write a SiN position statement on pedagogy courses at a national level.

d. View of organizations on the number of credits, and how good the courses are

- NHH – 20 are mandatory, 10 are elective, and the number varies greatly by department. NHH encourages students to take at least one course at another school in Norway, and preferably one at a school outside of Norway.
- At UiO some students are not allowed to take the courses from other departments.
- It would be good to have a comprehensive list of courses for the whole of Norway. UiO has one for themselves, but they offer courses just for their PhDs. On the other hand, UiT has a list, but it is pretty badly organized.
- In Denmark, all the PhD courses from all Universities are on the same Web page.
- There could be better coordination on how to find courses that are offered at the universities.

It would be good to have a national statement so we can look deeper in this issue.

e. Slack communication (for leaders or all the members?)

Only leaders. It is encouraged that everyone has their own Teams at their university. We are limited to 250 people on SiN Slack, so we don't have the capacity.

f. Campus building – Open space offices

At NTNU many new buildings are being built. And Statsbygg decided that there was one set of aerial norms across all the governmental institutions. This implies open space offices,

which affects the people at NTNU, and it will affect the others eventually. Should SiN address this?

Discussion: It would be good to take it to the labor union. There is also a controversy in Tromsø for not paying penalties for being late, and the university cannot press charges as they are both part of public institutions. Other universities also have issues with open space, e.g. a lot of people at NHH, then the newest building at UiT, etc.

Possible arguments: we need space as academics. Also, in case we have to be separated again (the COVID-19 situation), it would be impractical to have the open space solution. Furthermore, as plenty of lectures are digital/hybrid people would be talking over each other. In the worst-case scenario, we should ask for more group and meeting rooms if the open landscape is a must.

<https://www.universitetsavisa.no/akrinn-dion-gunnhild-saksvik-raanes/stipendiater-i-apent-kontorlandskap-sliter-med-a-konsentrere-seg-i-all-stoyen/204946>

Nicolas asked whether we should write a position statement. After a discussion the plan is set: we will keep the space issue in mind and do a possible position statement later this year. We will take it up at the next quarterly meeting.

Meeting ended 19:53