



International Affairs Meeting

REPORT

Riga

28th of February, 2023

2.11/23-StV-1

Start: 18:00

Location: Raiņa boulevard 19 & MS Teams

Host: Artūrs Danga

Report by: Artūrs Danga

Attendees: Mathias Jung (MF); Alens Aleksandrs Čerņa (DF SP); Eva Kiršteine (LU SP); Rajintha Silva (BVEF); Dana Zabel (BVEF); Reza Ghasempour (DF); Juliane Gotz (MF); Madara Ozola (HZF SP); Mir Nohan Ali (DF); Natalie Geerds (MF); Panagiotis Tsakonis (MF); Laura Milča (SZF SP); Alicia Devanne (HZF); Amanzhol Shamel (DF); Alma Meirkhanova (DF); Andrei Felsharuk (FMOF); Artūrs Danga (LU SP).

Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. LU SP website translation project
3. Outline for UiA STA representatives' visit
4. International students' survey Spring 2023
5. FORTHEM Buddy program LU coordinator position
6. UL ISC updates
7. FSC updates
8. Other

1. Introductions.

Students introduce themselves and answer these questions:

- Your name, surname
- Your faculty, study program
- Your home country + how did you end up in Latvia?
- Favourite place in Riga?

There is a wide diversity of students represented from all over the world, including, but not limited to Iran, Germany, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Pakistan, Greece, France and others. The faculties with the most significant international student enrolment - MF, BVEF, SZF and HZF - are largely represented as well. However, most attendees are from DF.

2. LU SP website translation project.

The Head of International Affairs at LU SP **Artūrs Danga** briefly describes the current progress on the LU SP website translation initiative, as the website is currently still available only in Latvian. During the meeting, volunteers sign up to help with several tasks:

- Writing up the article on the International Students' Collegium
 - ISC volunteers required
 - **Juliane Gotz** signed up
- Translating several missing articles
 - 1-2 volunteers required
 - **Madara Ozola** and **Laura Milča** signed up
- Editing/overview
 - 1 volunteer required
 - **Natalie Geerds** signed up

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ozHSbWhce_GTZWekDp9UbBWXNNRQC6Fvhza49SJByU0/edit?usp=share_link (Current progress sheet)

3. Outline for UiA STA representatives' visit.

Artūrs Danga informs of the upcoming UiA STA (University of Agder Students' Association) representatives' visit to UL from the 24th until the 28th of April, 2023. The members are presented with the agenda of the corresponding visit LU SP participated in at UiA.

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A brainstorming session takes place, with participants of the meeting providing ideas under each organizational topic:

- Institutions involved:
 - LU SP; UL ISC; UL Dept of Study Services; UL Ecocouncil; LU Academic Center Development Team; FORTHEM Office; UL Leadership.
- Work activities:
 - Workshops; discussions; work lunch; campus tour.
- Cultural activities:
 - Sightseeing (Old Town; Riverside; National library; Victory park); dining/shopping (ALA; Āgenskalns market; Central market; LIDO; Kaļķu vārti; Herbārijs); museums (KGB House; National Art Museum; Riga History Museum; Museum of Decorative Arts; RSU Anatomy museum); entertainment (Escape rooms; Paintball/airsoft; Bouldering).

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Ergh0LIgxFJrenIcQlNHbwpn7xQtOZqa3N9KccmcXw/edit?usp=share_link (LU SP visit to Norway agenda)

4. International students' survey Spring 2023

Artūrs Danga provides a draft for the International students' survey for the Spring 2023 semester. Everyone is asked to provide comments and suggestions. The survey draft is available at: <https://ej.uz/2023surveydraft>

Natalie Geerdts mentions that it should be important to include some sort of a note in the survey on what exactly will the data be used for and what actions will be taken based on student feedback.

Madara Ozola points out the need of having some contact information for responders. Artūrs lets her know that this is already included in the survey.

Reza Ghasempour and **Panagiotis Tsakonis** bring up the need for having the survey split into smaller sections so that it doesn't feel as long and tedious to fill, as well as to indicate the progress on filling the survey.

Reza Ghasempour also brings up a question on whether lecture schedules are delivered on time. Artūrs explains that this has already been included in the survey.

Artūrs Danga promises to share the presentation with ISC and await further feedback until Friday.

5. FORTHEM Buddy program LU coordinator position

Artūrs Danga mentions that he has been contacted by the UL Department of Study services and asked to appoint a student representative for the role of FORTHEM Buddy program LU coordinator.

The programme aims to promote connections among the first year FORTHEM students offering peer support in finding ways to be actively involved on campus.

A reduced group of "senior" students would promote the challenges to be proposed to the Buddy participants.

More info: <https://www.forthem-alliance.eu/get-involved/students/forthem-buddy-programme>

There are several clarifications to be made concerning the exact duties and responsibilities, as well as the time period for which any person would take on this task, therefore **Artūrs** agrees to inquire for more information at the UL FORTHEM Office.

6. UL ISC updates

The floor is given to ISC representatives to briefly mention current updates.

Rajintha Silva, the Chairperson of the ISC, gives an overview of the work of UL ISC thus far. She mentions collaboration with ESN and hosting the first official event for ISC. Additionally, posters with ISC contact information are being put up in each faculty building. Moreover, ISC is cooperating with RSU to host monthly Beer Pong Thursdays for international students.

Juliane Gotz, Head of Cultural Affairs at ISC, talks about preparing excursions for international students in Latvia. She also mentions reaching out to charity organizations in Latvia. She considers ISC hosting another event for Ukrainian students. Furthermore, she mentions possibly hosting a game night.

Panagiotis Tsakonis, Head of Social Affairs at ISC, mentions PR work and drawing international students' attention to the existence of ISC, in order to gain wider participation in next year's election.

7. FSC updates

Artūrs Danga presents data for international students enrolled in UL on the 1st of January, 2023.

LU international student distribution on January 1st, 2023			
Institution	TOTAL		
	Degree students	Guest matriculants	TOTAL
FACULTY OF MEDICINE	276	10	286
FACULTY OF BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS	137	103	240
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES	22	143	165
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES	72	77	149
FACULTY OF COMPUTING	58	10	68
FACULTY OF PEDAGOGY, PSYCHOLOGY AND ARTS	17	37	54
FACULTY OF PHYSICS, MATHS AND OPTOMETRY	44	4	48
FACULTY OF LAW	1	16	17
FACULTY OF GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES	1	11	12
FACULTY OF CHEMISTRY	3	4	7
FACULTY OF BIOLOGY	4	1	5
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY	1	1	2
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY	0	1	1
RESIDENCY	11	0	11
TOTAL	647	418	1065

The floor is given to FSC representatives to briefly mention current updates.

Alens Aleksandrs Čerņa, a representative from the Students' Council of the Faculty of Computing (DF SP), mentions that DF SP has developed its own International division, as well as is looking towards adapting student-help systems to aid international students too. He claims DF SP is willing to include more international students in its daily work. Additionally, he mentions cooperation with LU SP International Affairs.

Madara Ozola, a representative from the Students' Council of the Faculty of Humanities (HZF SP), mentions translation initiatives within HZF SP to include more international students, as well as conducting a small-scale survey to find out about international student well-being. On

top of that, HZF SP has paid attention to adapting one of its upcoming events to include international students.

Due to the absence of representatives from the Students' Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences (SZF SP), **Artūrs Danga** briefly mentions a few of the updates regarding SZF SP, including analysing international student surveys, creating a new Discord server for internationals, as well as attending more ISC meetings.

8. Other

Other matters include announcements for the upcoming task groups, to which all participants are encouraged to come. These task groups will include discussion on each of these matters, so to get actual input from LU SP members and international students alike.

- Task Group on Amendments for UL ISC Articles Of Association
 - 02.03. at 16:30

Reza Ghasempour brings up the issue of a lack of assistance from UL with acquiring residence permits for international students. Apparently, RTU is said to have provided more assistance in this regard. The issues are noted.

Artūrs Danga adjourns the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at: 19:04

Head of International Affairs

A. Danga

Protocol by

A. Danga