



## International Affairs Meeting

# REPORT

Riga

**28th of March, 2023**

**2.11/23-StV-2**

**Start:** 18:00

**Location:** Raiņa boulevard 19 & MS Teams

**Host:** Artūrs Danga

**Protocol by:** Artūrs Danga

**Attendees:** Laura Milča (SZF SP); Alens Aleksandrs Čerņa (LU SP); Mir Nohan Ali (DF); Kristaps Mauriņš-Krusts (SZF SP); Madara Ozola (HZF SP); Natalie Geerds (MF); Keita Emīlija Orlovska (BVEF SP); Artūrs Danga (LU SP).

### Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Updates on LU SP website translation
3. Activity plan for UiA STA visit
4. Excursions for international students
5. UL ISC updates
6. FSC updates
7. 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?

The meeting is attended mostly by FSC representatives (Heads of International Affairs at their respective FSCs), there is also a representative present from the UL International Students' Collegium, as well as an international student from the Faculty of Medicine.

## 2. Updates on LU SP website translation.

The Head of International Affairs at LU SP **Artūrs Danga** briefly describes what progress has been made since the last meeting on the LU SP website translation initiative. The website is said to have been translated roughly by 90%.

- Translation still required for
  - Academic affairs
  - Study modernisation
- Student representation visuals are in progress
  - [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BA9eZLxEZ3RkNDnRXi50SwN\\_5bMQz5NOIPho62aWcXw/edit#slide=id.g2262bb2e68c\\_0\\_573](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BA9eZLxEZ3RkNDnRXi50SwN_5bMQz5NOIPho62aWcXw/edit#slide=id.g2262bb2e68c_0_573)

**Artūrs Danga** explains that some of the articles provided in the Latvian version of the LU SP website will not be available in the English version due to that specific information being irrelevant to international students.

Regarding the “Elections” (“Vēlēšanas”) article, **Madara Ozola** mentions that it should be mentioned that the elections take place in general, even if international students currently are technically allowed to participate in them, but are mostly unable to due to the entire process taking place in Latvian only. **Alens Aleksandrs Čerņa** arguments that this information should be provided nonetheless, because of the experience in DF, where some international students have participated.

**Artūrs Danga** agrees with the arguments and explains that currently the legal documentation laying out the election process is available in Latvian only and would take a lot of resources to be translated in English, as well as the campaigning, balloting, vote counting and other related

procedures take place in Latvian, with there being no feasible way currently to provide English translations for all of these processes. He suggests that the “Elections” page should feature the visuals explaining the election process in general, but likely the translation will not be a 1:1 copy of the original page in Latvian.

The prepared visuals are being discussed, and the attendees agree on providing the sheet to other members of the LU SP board in order to receive more in-depth commentary on what needs to be fixed or adapted content-wise.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ozHSbWhce\\_GTZWekDp9UbBWXNNRQC6Fvhza49SJBvU0/edit?usp=share\\_link](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ozHSbWhce_GTZWekDp9UbBWXNNRQC6Fvhza49SJBvU0/edit?usp=share_link) (Current progress sheet)

### **3. Activity plan for UiA STA 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 comments from the brainstorming session at the previous meeting have been taken into regard for preparation of the new agenda, with which the attendees are introduced with: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ZDWuwl2WmyQ9XFD859OOMvKg9Jq8v5fHikzasdv-6s/edit#slide=id.p> (current agenda)

**Artūrs Danga** briefly describes the visit agenda, mentioning that the UiA STA representatives have shown particular interest in seeing the historical buildings of the UL, as well as to meet with several UL institutions. The UL Museum might be able to do a guided tour around Raiņa boulevard 19.

However, there are activities that still require a more detailed concept to be developed for, such as:

- Meeting with UL International Students’ Collegium (UL ISC)
- Workshop with UL Department of Study Services (+ FORTHEM Office)
- Presentation & discussion with UL Leadership
- Excursion around Riga
- Presentation & discussion with ACAP

- Workshop & discussion with UL Ecocouncil
- Excursion around Jūrmala

A task group is proposed to come up with these concepts.

**Artūrs Danga** claims that everyone from the Latvian side is very welcome to join and participate in any activities during the UiA STA visit.

**Alens Aleksandrs Čerņa** brings up that the scheduled Galleria Riga rooftop may be closed at the time of the visit. **Madara Ozola** mentions that when she was visiting recently, the place was open. **Laura Milča** suggests having lunch at Galleria Centrs, at a new place that has opened on the 4th floor.

It is agreed to adjust the agenda during the visit, if possible.

#### **4. Excursions for international students.**

**Artūrs Danga** informs that this year it is intended to organize excursions around places in Latvia for international students. There is an informal cooperation agreement between ESN Riga (Erasmus Student Network in Riga) and UL ISC.

The ESN has asked for input from UL ISC and LU SP on three provided locations for a potential excursion: Jūrmala, Sigulda and Ķemeri.

**Mir Nohan Ali** mentions that the potential time for the excursion could be the 3rd week of April, but it has not been confirmed yet.

**Artūrs Danga** argues that Sigulda is a very common destination for many internationals, and so is Jūrmala, therefore he suggests to pick Ķemeri, as it could provide kind of a more niche experience.

**Laura Milča** counters Artūrs's view, asking what could even be done in Ķemeri to begin with, since it is just a place to "look at trees". Artūrs Danga responds that Ķemeri is his pick because

it is a unique swamp of national significance, as well as there is a newly renovated historical park site.

**Alens Aleksandrs Čerņa** says that Ķemeri is best situated for that time of the year (spring), arguing that Jūrmala is best at summer, while Sigulda may be best at autumn.

**Artūrs Danga** also mentions that LU SP along with UL ISC also intends to organize a separate excursion from ESN, just for international students at UL due to ESN being more oriented towards the ERASMUS students, but not the degree students. It is agreed that a more in depth discussion on this would likely take place sometime later, perhaps, in May.

A small brainstorming session takes place, **Kristaps Mauriņš-Krusts** brings up Kolkas rags, although it is argued that it may be too difficult to get to and may just not be as impressive. **Madara Ozola** brings up Liepāja as a potential location, although it is also said that may just be too difficult to organize from a logistical point of view. **Alens Aleksandrs Čerņa** brings up factories and companies, such as “Laima” or “Ādažu čipsi”, where international students may not have visited. **Artūrs Danga** also suggests Kuldīga. **Mir Nohan Ali** mentions Sigulda. **Natalie Geerdt**s mentions Rundāle. Some locations in Rīga are also discussed, such as Mežaparks and Daugavgrīva.

## 5. UL ISC updates

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

**Mir Nohan Ali**, the Vice-Chairperson of UL ISC briefs the attendees on what the ISC has accomplished since the last meeting. Putting up informational posters has finished, the excursion for international students is in planning, as well as a strategic seminar took place. In addition to that, guest lectures for every faculty are in planning, with one already being arranged at the Faculty of Business, Management and Economics.

**Artūrs Danga** also briefly mentions that the LU SP Assembly has adopted the amendments in the Articles of Association of UL ISC, as well as a page with information about ISC has been published on the LU SP website. Moreover, a survey has been sent out for international students.

## 6. FSC updates

*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 is having an upcoming International affairs meeting, also possibilities to organize events for international students are being discussed. Some cooperation may be planned in the near future with UL ISC. Along with SZF SP and two other university students' councils an event is being organized, to which the international students are also invited.

**Madara Ozola**, a representative from the Students' Council of the Faculty of Humanities (HZF SP), mentions that nothing much has been going on, although there is a movie night taking place tonight that the international students are invited to as well.

**Kristaps Mauriņš-Krusts**, a representative from the Students' Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences (SZF SP), mentions that SZF SP is working with the faculty coordinator Aleksandra Kjakste on finding new ways to reach out to Erasmus and degree students at the faculty. Information on events is to be sent out through these channels and it would help to see how many international students are interested in events or other activities.

## 7. Other

Other matters include the mentioning of a potential task group for planning out the excursions, although unconfirmed. Currently, the biggest upcoming task is to host the UiA STA representatives soon. Attendees are encouraged to join the International affairs WhatsApp chat group.

No other matters are proposed for discussion.

**Artūrs Danga** adjourns the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at: 18:50**

Head of International Affairs

*A. Danga*

Protocol by

*A. Danga*

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