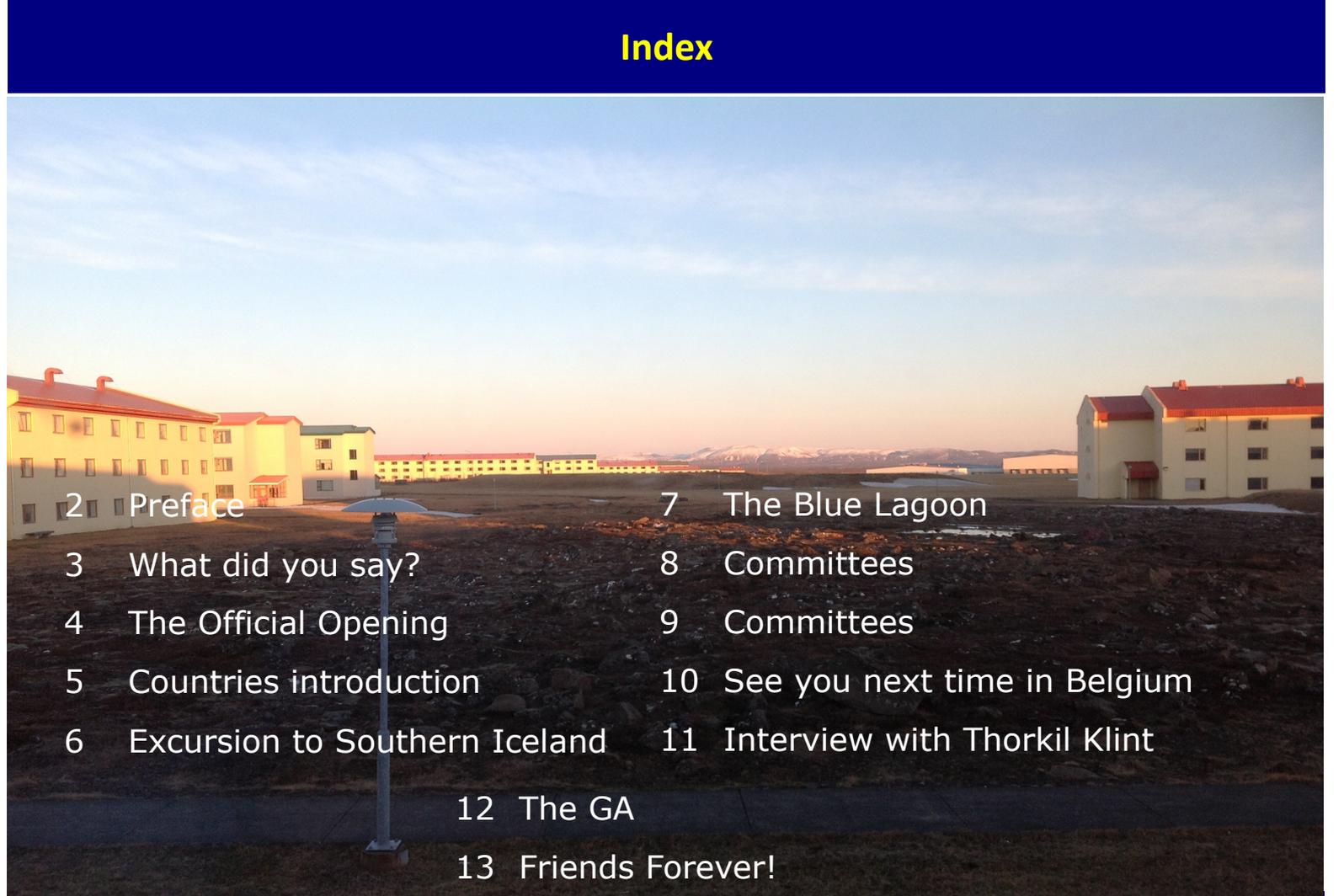


Model European Press

Baltic Sea Region Iceland

- Interview with President Thorkil Klint
- Discover all committees
- Loads of pictures!
- And much more!!





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Preface

Dear participants and supervisors of the MEP BSR Iceland,

Right now, you are reading the newspaper we made the last couple of days. We tried our best to make articles that are interesting for you to read and we hope you'll enjoy them. We worked very hard to get it finished in time, but we think it was worth the blood, sweat and loads of tears. We want to wish you all the luck in the General Assembly, let's hope all of your resolutions will be accepted. We also hope you had an amazing week here in Iceland (we surely did). We want to thank Nina Nørgaard and everybody who worked so hard to make this week happen.

Although the week is almost over, MEP isn't. Take the things you learned and use them back home. Try to make a difference, and always stay true to your own opinion.

All the best,

Marco Verbeek and Mare Visser
Pressteam MEP BRS Iceland 2013

Don't forget to check out the MEP BSR website, www.mepbsr.org

What did you just say?

Because many different countries are participating, there are many different languages. But do you know what they say?

1. Hello, how are you?

- German: Hallo, wie geht es dir?
- Dutch: Hoi, hoe gaat het?
- Danish: Hej, hvordan har du det?
- Estonian: Tere, kuidas läheb?
- Finnish: Hei, miten menee?
- Greenlandic: Haluu qanoq ippit?
- Icelandic: Hæ, hvernig ert þú?
- Norwegian: Hei, hvordan har du det?
- Serbian: Здраво, како си?
- Swedish: Hej, hur mår du?
- Lithuanian: Labas, kaip gyveni?



2. In which committee are you?

- German: In welchem Komitee bist du?
- Dutch: In welke commissie zit je?
- Danish: I hvilken komité er du i?
- Estonian: Mis komisjonis sa oled?
- Finnish: Missä komiteassa olet?
- Greenlandic: Gruppeq Sorlerneiippit?
- Icelandic: Sem nefnd ert þú?
- Norwegian: I hvilken komité er du?
- Serbian: У којој комитет си?
- Swedish: I vilken kommitté silter du?
- Lithuanian: Kuriame tu komitete?

3. Your argument is invalid.

- German: Dein Argument ist irrelevant.
- Dutch: Je argument is irrelevant.
- Danish: Dit argument er ugyldigt.
- Estonian: Su väide on vale.
- Finnish: Argumenttisi on tarpeeton.
- Greenlandic: Oqaluuserisat kukkuvoq.
- Icelandic: Rök þín er ógild.
- Norwegian: Ditt argument er ugyldig.
- Serbian: Ваш аргумент је неважећи.
- Swedish: Dina argument är felaktiga.
- Lithuanian: Tavo argumentas

4. Believe me, I've done my research.

- German: Glaub mir, ich habe recherchiert.
- Dutch: Geloof me, ik heb onderzoek gedaan.
- Danish: Tro mig, jeg har undersøgt det.
- Estonian: Usu mind, ma olen seda uurinud.
- Finnish: Usto minga, olen tekhyt koti lätsyni.
- Greenlandic: Upperinuga, atuagassalika atuareerpakka.
- Icelandic: Trúðu mér, ég hef gert rannsóknir mínar.
- Norwegian: Tro meg, jeg kan mine fakta.
- Serbian: Верујте ми, ја сам урадио своје истраживање.
- Swedish: Tro mig, jag har koll på min fakta.
- Lithuanian: Patikek manimi, as ruosiausi

The official opening of MEP BSR Iceland 2013

The seventeenth edition of Model European Parliament Baltic Sea Region has officially started. The opening ceremony, held in the centre of Reykjavik, started off with a word from coordinator Nina Nørgaard. She started by telling us how glad she was we all made it to Iceland. The last twelve months, the organisation of MEP Baltic Sea Region had worked extremely hard to make this MEP session, in the beautiful country of Iceland, happen. MEP BRS started ten years ago, with delegations from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Russia and Germany. Guest countries were Spain and Italy. Now, delegations from Norway, Greenland and Iceland have also joined the group, just like guest countries Belgium, Austria and Serbia. But there's never been a MEP BRS session so far north on the globe.

Mrs. Nørgaard continued her speech, and explained to us that it does not matter that some countries participating in MEP BRS are not members of the European Union. We all share a continent and share our ambitions with other young parliamentarians.

When Mrs. Nørgaard was finished, Katrín Jakobsdóttir, the minister of education and culture of Iceland, came to the microphone. She talked about her view on the topics the delegation members would be discussing in the following days. She thought they are overwhelming, but also very interesting. These topics are on the agenda of real governments all over Europe. We need to tackle the problems and come up with good solutions. We need to save Europe from extinction and when Mrs Jakobsdóttir looked at us, she was very pleased with the genuine interest you

parliamentarians show towards politics. She believes that you guys are able to do what you need to do, to find solutions to the problems you have been given. But you need to keep in mind that solutions to these problems will influence our daily life. We all want to be safe and healthy and the solutions to the given issues should improve our daily life.

She told us, that in her opinion, the most important quality of a good politician is to be a good listener. Don't just pretend to be listening, but listen carefully to the people surrounding you. But you also need to listen to people who have a different opinion than you and try to understand where these opinions come from. Also, don't forget about your own opinion, you need to listen to yourself as well. You have your own voice and you need to use it in order to be able to make a responsible decision.



Chocolates for the president, the countries introduce themselves

After an inspirational speech by Nina Nørgaard, coordinator of MEP Baltic Sea Region, and Katrín Jakobsdóttir, the participating delegations got a chance to present themselves to the other countries

First to represent their country were two very nice traditionally dressed Austrians. They came prepared, as they are the only delegation smart enough to bring something to Thorkil Klint, president of the GA. They told us about the youth culture in Austria, the world championship skiing (which they had obviously won) and being open-minded.

Belgium talked to us about beer and why their country is so good, while Denmark taught us a short, but valuable, lesson in why we have to work together. How we can make a difference if we build a platform and take the things we learn this week home, to keep making a difference over there.

Estonia started his speech in their rural language and continued telling us about their proud country. Apparently they are very stubborn and want to step higher than they have ever been. Finland

talked to us about how they are not just a country covered in wood, but that they are at the international top of education and many other things. But they also emphasized that Finland needs the European Union for more economic diversion. Germany taught us that not all stereotypes are true and Greenland accidentally let a teacher speak instead of a student. But, as they clarified "we are here to learn."

Iceland welcomed us to their beautiful country and their ambassador told us some funny facts; did you know their parliament was founded in 930? Lithuania made a speech about their history, how they are always willing to take all challenges and how they are, to the astonishment of many, a free country. Norway looked forward to the debates and also they didn't know they had to do a speech, shame on you, Norway!

Serbia informed us about the many important people that have been born in their country. For example Nikola Tesla, one of the biggest inventors ever. They also talked about their amazing nightlife. We did some research about this, and the capital of Serbia, Belgrade, has been awarded best party city of the whole world!

Last, but definitely not least, was Sweden. We learnt that Swedish people produce a lot of guns, and they cry a lot. Just to make things a little bit more complicated, they have an enormous law book. And most importantly, they ride polar bears just as much as we all do.

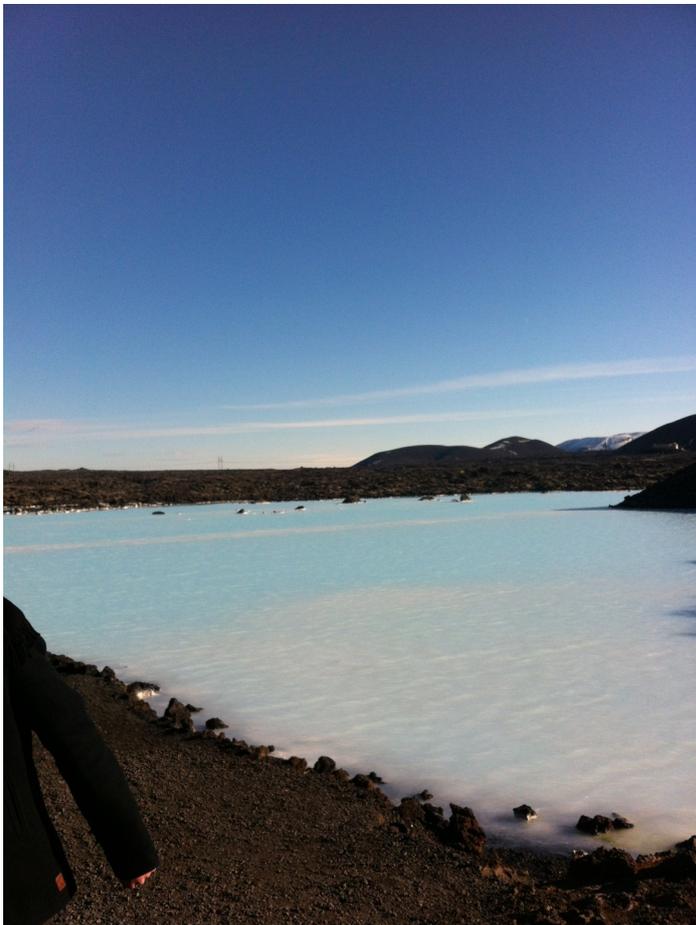


Discover Iceland



Blue Lagoon

On Monday after the ceremony, the delegates together with the Committee President (and the press) went to the Blue Lagoon. The Blue Lagoon is a geothermal spa, water heated by lava formation. It is one of the most popular attractions in Iceland. The temperature of the water lies between 32 and 40 degrees Celsius. Some people believe the water has magical powers...



Thank You, Mr./Mrs. President

(These articles are based on short time experiences of the committees)

Committee I — Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Committee president: Marie Bartelt

The question of the protection of biodiversity

When I entered the meeting room where committee I was seated, they were just ending a little break. Cups with water were on the tables and when the committee president wanted to restart the discussion on the OC's, everybody retrieved their attention.

Belgium wanted to have all the facts right and thought somebody should do some homework. "Yeah, somebody" is the group's response.

Committee I is a very unanimous group. They discuss about the OC's and when Marie called upon a vote, almost everybody agreed with each other. They rushed through the OC's and although not all the parliamentarians were equally active this committee is very serious about their OC's. They add and remove certain parts of the sentence, just to make it as perfect as possible. We expect a lot from this hardworking group.



Committee II — Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Committee president: Jens Jörgensen Moberg

The question of how to fight global warming

This committee has the hard task to create a resolution about global warming. When I joined them in their makeshift meeting room, they were working in groups, forming some OC's. I had a little talk with committee president, Jens, and he told me his parliamentarians just worked a little too hard. They went in a little too intense and deep in the discussions and they weren't making any progress anymore.

He then told them they had 5 more minutes, before they were "going down with the OC's". But the parliamentarians wanted more time to prepare their OC's. When I left, they started the discussion. But if they get it finished in time, it will probably be one heck of a resolution.



Committee III — Social Affairs

Committee President: Alexander Brenn

The question of how youth unemployment can be solved

This committee with committee president Alexander Brenn, discusses the question of how youth unemployment can be solved. The discussion was already at high speed when I entered the room. Everyone was mostly participating actively. Some, unfortunately, a bit passively. The actively participating delegates were dominant in the discussion. This caused that most of the ideas were from these dominant countries, Lithuania, Belgium, Denmark and Germany. The good thing about this group was that they were serious and not joking around. This is a major score for the committee on Social Affairs.

Committee IV — Culture and Education

Committee president: Simon Rastelli

The question of how to educate young people to become global citizens

Committee IV is a very serious group. Their president is quite strict and the few minutes I spent with this committee they were discussing an OC from Norway. The OC was very bulky and every piece and bit was discussed by the parliamentarians. They were talking about students going abroad, and how they should use the media to promote this. Denmark was very passionate and had good arguments, just like Belgium. Norway forgot about the thank word quite a lot of times, and the committee president was fed up with it. Norway wasn't allowed to talk anymore unless she'd use the thank word, no more warnings.

This committee kept talking about the same thing over and over again much to annoyance of Austria and other countries. Maybe the extensive discussions will help them in the General Assembly, because they surely know their resolution by heart.



Committee V — Constitutional Affairs

Committee President: Kirstine Bukhave

The question of how to bring the EU closer to its citizens



How do we get the population of Europe interested in and bring them closer to the EU? This is the main question of committee V. Under the direction from Kirstine Bukhave, this committee started the real discussion after a little chat. Due to the free Wi-Fi connection in the committee building, the delegates could share their ideas and all other information by mail and Google-docx. Some new ideas came up and were accepted or rejected. The mood of this committee was really good. Everyone could talk with everyone. This created a healthy discussion.

See you next time in Belgium!

The next Model European Parliament Baltic Sea Region will be hosted by Bruges and Blankenberge, Belgium. From October 26th to November 1st the delegations will be making their resolutions in these beautiful little towns. The organization, Paul van Turenhout and Nick Verwimp, has provided us with an programme, and we will quickly summarize the highlights for you. The delegates arrive on Saturday and get to meet their host families. On Sunday the opening ceremony will be held at the Provinciaal Hof in Bruges. There will be some guest speakers and everybody will be having lunch at the Hof. On Monday, the committee meetings will be held there. On Tuesday the delegates will have committee meetings and the principals/teachers will be going on a boat trip through the canals of Bruges. Wednesday there will be a trip to the In Flanders Fields Museum, a World War I-museum, and other activities. On Thursday we will all go to Brussels for the General Assembly. Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, will address you all. In the evening, there will be a dinner with special Belgian fries. This will be on the promenade in Blankenberge. On Friday, November 1st, the delegates go home. We hope to see you there!



Meet the Boss

An interview with the president of the GA, Thorkil Klint.

When and how did you get involved in the MEP-programme?

"I participated in Model United Nations (MUN), where the United Nations are simulated. Then, I went to India together with Nina Nørgaard. That was in November 2011. And from there it all just went."

Is there anyone who had inspired you to participate in this project?

"There is no specific person who has inspired me to participate. It's just very exciting to meet new persons and I noticed that the people I met at the MEP and MUN are the most engaged persons I ever met. I've never seen such fiery souls who have such an engagement level."

What exactly are your duties during this week?

"Well, of course I'm the president of the GA, I tie up the loose ends and I'm in charge of the CP's. When this week started, I didn't really know what my role would be. But I noticed that when people don't know what to do or have any questions they come to me, mainly because the teachers are quite far away."

I try to meet with the CP's each afternoon, to know what is going on. I try to be trustworthy, to just be there. Try to be the fifth element, the ether, like Plato described it. I check up on the committee meetings and haven't had to interrupt yet. Everything is going smoothly, I have confidence in the CP's. But besides that I don't really do anything."

Which committee had your own personal interest, and why?

"A presidential worthy answer would be "oh, they're all very important. I can't choose." But personally I think the youth employment is the most interesting and the most actual. We are all young people standing in front of the labour market. I think that's where solutions are most needed."

In your opinion, what makes a good politician?

"Actually, my grandfather wrote a book named 'The Power Is Yours, How To Get The Power'. And there's an entire chapter about which qualities you should have to rule a country.

Funny enough, the book says you don't need any qualities, you need to be in the right place at the right time, you need to have a lot of luck and the circumstances need to be right.

Personally, I think you have to be engaged. If you don't dream about being a politician, I don't think you will become one. If you're not 100 per cent willing to give yourself to the job, if you're not looking past the other things in life, you probably won't be a good politician. You need to make so many sacrifices.

I admire people who are willing to make these sacrifices. That's what makes a good politician, being engaged and willing to sacrifice. And of course talent, and looks."



"I want to be rich and admirable."

Do you want to be a politician when you 'grow up'?

"No, I don't, I want to educate myself. When I started highschool, I thought: When I'm finished with this, I will know exactly what I want. But I haven't got a clue.

I would love to be a sports commentator, just travelling around and watching football while being paid. I am to study next year, and I'm working in a kindergarten at the moment as a substitute teacher. But I don't want to do that for the rest of my life. I'm going to study knowledge & management of the state, in Copenhagen. It's a political direction, but more on a analytic level.

I want to be rich and admirable."

To end this short interview, do you have any tips for the delegates concerning the general assembly?

"First, please behave and look representable. Everybody's got a price, even I can be bought (good job, Austria). Don't wear jeans and button up your jacket while speaking. Speak up, and even though you are bored, look interested."

A Country of Great Parliamentary Tradition

The general assembly is opened by our GA president, Thorkil Klint. He called for Mr. Hans Lindemann to take the floor. Mr. Lindemann told us about the history of MEP BSR, why we get together twice a year. We get to experience how the European parliament works and we get to build an international network. He hopes we all made new friends, had loads of fun and take home positive energy and memories.



Then, the president of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, came to the microphone and started off his speech by welcoming us to this country, a country of great parliamentary tradition. The country of the largest glaciers of Europe and where big changes regarding mother earth take place. When Mr. Grímsson was writing his speech, he was wondering whether he should give us a brief history about the parliament in Iceland or tell us about the future. Since he couldn't make up his mind,

like most people in parliament, he decided to do both.

The Norwegian Vikings went to Iceland 1100 years ago. The settlement in Iceland was sort of a democratic protest because the Vikings weren't willing to respect the authority's in their own country. They wanted a country based on laws, not just follow the word of the king, and started the Icelandic parliament in 900. It's the oldest parliament in the western world and it was founded on the exact place where the European and American plate meet.

They've maintained their democratic system for century's without an executive king or dictator. Settlements in Iceland succeeded because of the democracy.

During the financial crisis, with the Icesave crash, the country unwillingly became an example for the rest of Europe. They were, and still are, compared to Spain, Greece and now Cyprus. But a lot of people don't know Iceland in the process of recovering. And they are doing pretty well.

Then, Mr. Grímsson tells us about being a politician nowadays. Delegates are taken from the nation to specialize themselves in certain subjects, be able to discuss and produce laws, lead the country and make live changing decisions. The internet has changed a lot in this process. There used to be a fundamental difference between the knowledge of the rulers and the citizens in a country. Now, thanks to the internet, we all share the same information. Because of this parliaments are in crisis, all over Europe. Parliaments are not tested every 4 years, like they used to be. They are tested every day, every second thousands of people give their opinion about the decisions made. If a parliament makes a mistake, the people will know immediately.

This means that the elected delegates need more skills, ruling the country is more difficult than ever before. They are not the privileged club they used to be. It's more exciting, more democratic and way more challenging. We are having an everyday dialogue, like we saw in the Ice-save conflict. All European parliaments immediately came together to talk about the issue when the bank crashed.

According to the president, the main thing Europe has to offer to the world is parliamentary democracy. The rule of law and human rights. Also, one of the greatest things about Europe is the variety of people, of opinions and of cultures. You can put democracy everywhere. But when there is not a strong culture democracy will not survive.



He tells us that we are the first generation with the task to reform the parliamentary democracy. Now every citizen has as much information as the parliament. This has never happened before in history and not many generations have been so fortunate.

We want to thank Mr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson for giving this inspirational speech and for taking the time to come to our general assembly.

The General Assembly

First off to defend their resolution was committee 1 of environment, public health and food safety. Belgium submitted an amendment, but it was rejected by the delegates. Although the committee got a lot of questions during the open debate, they were able to answer most of them in a convincing way. The president of the GA was a bit disappointed when only Belgium, Denmark and Austria were answering the questions. He called for some other countries to stand up, but there was no reaction from the other countries in the committee. When the presidents asked for a speech against the resolution, there appeared to be none. A bit annoyed Thorkil Klint stated that it's not that hard to do a speech against and in response a Delegate from Denmark raised their sign to improvise a speech against.

Sadly enough for the committee, a lot of delegates disagreed with the resolution and so it was rejected with 20 votes in favour and 28 votes against.

Next up was committee 2 to present their resolution about global warming. The committee had clear answers in the open debate and they knew what they were talking about. Their English is very fluent and this definitely helps them to get things clear with the delegates. Germany had a speech against the resolution and especially against the DESERTEC project. And as the delegate stated, low carbon fuels are also bad for the environment. The delegate wanted to put an end to global warming, but not with this resolution. Luckily for the committee most of the delegates voted in favour for this resolution so it was accepted.

After another quit break we returned to our seats and the general assembly continued with committee 3 of social affairs. We, as press, were very pleased to hear that Belgium mentioned the press when greeting everybody in their opening speech. In the open debate there was a bit of confusion about operative clause 13 whether it states 'woman' or 'young woman' and the committee itself got a bit confused. But, as Germany stated, "have you ever seen many older pregnant woman?"

Belgium pulled a disappointed face when he's not allowed to answer a certain question. Finland has to rephrase their question 3 times because of many point of orders from the committee, especially from Serbia. Denmark then had a point of privilege and asked the committee not to react so arrogant, but their remark was thrown back at them by the GA president. The delegates then went into voting because our food was waiting. Maybe the growling stomachs had a bad influence on the mood of the delegates, because the resolution was rejected with a whopping 41 votes against.



After lunch it was committee 4's turn. They had to find a way to educate young people to become global citizens. There were no amendments and in the open debate there were not as many questions as there were with the other resolutions. Only Denmark, Belgium and Austria are responding to the questions asked but after a while Germany and Norway start to get a little confident. More and more questions

are coming from the delegates sitting in front of the committee. Finland wanted to ask a question, but when he was able to he already forgot what he wanted to say so he just sits down again. Denmark had a speech against the resolution but the resolution is still accepted with 24 votes in favor and 16 against.

Last, but definitely not least, is committee 5 on constitutional affairs. They have an amendment from their own committee and it got voted in favor by almost everybody, so it was accepted. In the speech against the amendment the member of committee 5 quickly asked the other delegates to vote in favor of their resolution and quite some giggles rose from the audience. There were several points of order in the open debate. But the committee knew their resolution by heart and the delegates were able to answer all the questions. When it was time to vote Belgium got very confused and it took them a few times to get the voting right. Nevertheless, this last resolution was also accepted, with 29 votes in favor.

Friends forever!



Opening



Excursion



General Assembly

