

Minutes of the Nordic Presidents' Meeting in Longyearbyen, May 15. and 16. 2015.

The host for this year's meeting was the Norwegian Chemical Society (NKS). The following were present at the meeting: Øyvind Mikkelsen (president NKS), Harald Walderhaug (gen. secr. NKS), Helena Grennberg (president Swedish Chemical Society, SK), Agneta Sjögren (gen. secr. SK), Stefan Vogel (president, Danish Chemical Society, DKF), Mariann Holmberg and Triin Gyllenberg (representatives of the Finnish Chemical Society) and Heleena Karrus (gen. secr. Finnish Chemical Society).

The venue for the meeting was room Tempelet at Polarinstituttet, Longyearbyen, and lasted between 14.30 and 18.00 on the 15th, and between 10.30 and ca 12.30 on the 16th. From 14.00 to ca 16.00 on the 16th a presentation of ongoing research projects at Polarinstituttet was given by representatives of UNIS (University of Svalbard) (see below).

1. Wellcome by the representatives of the host. Thereafter, Tone Hertzberg from Syssemmannen's (The Norwegian authorities') staff oriented about Svalbard – its special political status, geography, climate, fauna, flora, history, etc. In the old days (19th and early 20th century) the hunters that lived here stayed in small cottages at trap stations and hunted seal, polar fox and polar bear. In modern times, coal mining has become a traditional activity, and still is. This activity is mainly located in and near Longyearbyen (Store Norske), and in Barentsburg (Russians and Ukrainians). Research stations are located in Ny Ålesund (many nations are represented), and in Longyearbyen UNIS and Polarinstituttet is located. Tourism is an increasing activity, and there are daily flights between mainland Norway and Longyearbyen, named after an American that started the coal mining activity in Svalbard (Spitsbergen) around the year of 1900. The name Svalbard is old Norse and means literally "cold coast". Even though the Gulf stream is passing into the Barents sea around the archipelago, the ocean is partly covered with ice.

2. Presentation of and ongoing activities in our societies.

Harald gave a short presentation of NKS and recent activities, that included the national meeting in 2014. NKS has roughly 1900 personal members and 24 supporting company members, but has ambitions regarding recruitment of more and younger members. NKS has activities directed also to young people, like the popular "spørrespalten" – a web based communication channel, located on the society's homepage.

Helena told us about a New Strategy in the Swedish Chemical Society (around 3500 members): A vision for the Chemistry or the Society. "Mossig"/"Omossig" : Old fashioned and boring – or something new and exciting?

Stefan could report on increasing number of members in the Danish Chemical Society, that now goes up to 830. The society is also responsible for a chemical dictionary "Kemisk ordbog", in Danish.

Heleena and Triin oriented on the status for the Finnish Chemical Society that in addition also includes the Chemical Society of Finland (Finska Kemistsamfundet) and Finnish Society of Chemical Engineers, after the reorganization in 2012. Altogether, the society has ca 3000

members, and reports on an increasing number of younger members. Student grants (ca 2000 Eur) are offered and seem to be a way of recruitment.

3. The EuCheMS conference in Sevilla 2016. Helena, who was Chairman for the EuCheMS conference in Istanbul in 2014, and Chairman for the Sevilla conference Peter Edwards, on Skype from UK, oriented. There was a drop in the number of attendees to ca 1200 at the Istanbul meeting, compared to 2500 in Budapest 2006 and Nürnberg in 2010. It is therefore important to make good advertisement of the conference well in advance. The view of the organizers is to make it The Conference for The Chemistry in Europe. A one page flyer intended for advertising in the societies is planned. The conference will consist of 8 main subjects, and will take place from the 11th to the 15th of September 2016.

4. Copyright Acta Chem. Scand. Lars Skattebøl (Norway) has informed that he still is the formal copyright owner of the journal. He now wants to resign from this duty. It was decided that the nordic chemical societies accept his resignation, and Agneta will write him a letter, confirming this.

5. Recruitment of younger members to our societies. The Danish Society of Chemistry arranges one annual meeting – TOKS – Træf for Organisk Kemi-Studerende – for around 150 students. There is also a more recent and corresponding meeting for students in inorganic chemistry. The society uses the registration form for the Annual Meeting of the Danish Chemistry Society actively for recruitment of (younger) members. A very simple and web-based procedure. A "Young Chemists Meeting" is wanted – it should not compete with the Annual Meeting, though. Both Denmark and Finland also edit student magazines, directed to the gymnasium level. Regarding EYCN (the European Young Chemists Network) Finland has an arrangement that involves "linjeforeninger" – an arrangement that will be tried also in Norway.

6. IUPAC. Representatives from the Norwegian and Danish societies will attend the GA in Busan, Korea, in august. The deadline for appointment of National Representatives and Titular Members to the various divisions had already been passed at the time of the Nordic Presidents' meeting, but the status is the following: Norway and Sweden have 3 to 4 representatives each, Finland 6 (some of them new), and Denmark has 36 persons involved in the IUPAC system. A general question is: How do we recruit younger scientists into IUPAC? Also: There is a deadline at the 12th of June to nominate members for the Bureau. Do we have any from Scandinavia/Norden?

7. Our Member Magazines. These are now produced both in a paper- and an electronic edition. While Finland and Norway report that their societies have large influence on the contents, in Sweden some worries exist whether the magazine is intended primarily for the members of the Swedish Chemical Society. One annual English edition of the Swedish magazine is produced. The magazines are important for the societies' members regarding identity – they form a sort of glue that unites the corresponding societies. This is important to remember in a time where the economy (advertisement income) may be somewhat problematic.

A suggestion came up at the meeting: We will launch a new and biannual **Nordic Chemical Societies' Newsletter**. It should be posted on our respective web-pages in the end of the year, and should contain articles and announcements of mutual nordic interest. The material, consisting of ca two pages with info on the Presidents' meeting, views for the next two years from each society, and one or two articles per society, will be edited in cooperation between the societies. We start this year, and hope that it will be wellcome by our members.

8. Presentation of Chemistry Research Projects at Polarinstituttet/ArcticTechnology/UNIS.

Mark Hermanson and two students, Michelle Nerentorp (Chalmers) and Katharina Halbach (NTNU) gave an interesting presentation during two hours of ongoing research in the arctics, related to airborne pollution and possible impact on animals and humans. Some of the substances are generated in the arctic atmosphere (bromine oxides) and transported over large areas. Other substances (like methyl-Hg) may be formed far away and brought to the arctic area where they may combine with substances in plants and animals, forming toxins of various forms. The transport is studied using special filter equipment and by e.g. satellites.



Ready for ice-caving on the 17th of May at Longyearbreen: From left to right:

Helena, Triin, Øyvind, Stefan, Harald, Agneta, Mariann, and Heleena.