



INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

NEWSLETTER

September 2023
Issue No. 488

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **October Newsletter** is **September 15**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen, email and to int.forum@online.no. The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit *all* material.



From the President

Arendalsuka, Norway's unique and wonderful festival of democracy gets bigger and better. Public feedback was that this year's event was the best ever. That's what they said last year, too. High-quality speakers are matched by high-quality audiences – who applaud, laugh, and listen in pin-drop silence to experts who explain what is really going on in these troubled times.

A record 160,000 people attended this year's Arendalsuka and a record 2,000 events were held in venues, ranging from the impressive 700-seat Kulturhuset to the grand Gamle Rådhus, from charming cottages to cozy cafes, from street-corner tents to the majestic tall-ships *Sørlandet*, *Statsråd Lehmkuhl* and *Christian Radich*. Streets and restaurants buzzed with chatter and laughter. All venues were packed. Some like the premier Kulturhuset had long queues as people waited to get in to hear prominent speakers.

Informed public opinion is the foundation of democracy. Here was proof that most people want fact-based, knowledgeable analyses from credible experts. Visitors from abroad appreciated the openness, the celebration of democracy, the spirit of fun and the public desire to be better informed.

Arendalsuka is especially important because democracy is retreating worldwide. Last year, 60 % of the world's population was under authoritarian rule. This year, it rose to 72 %. Nobel Laureate and former CNN colleague and Nobel laureate Maria Ressa warned that 'Like climate change, democracy is reaching a tipping point.' Arendalsuka is a beating heart of democracy and it is up to citizens to keep it beating. The Mayor of Arendal Robert Nordli says that 'the most important thing is that people learn something from Arendalsuka.' This event shows that learning is lifelong, inspiring, fun and social.

And that is also what we do in International Forum through our programmes, which are informative, enjoyable and social. Autumn brings a superb line-up of events. See you there!

Best Wishes,

Anita Pratap
President

F R O M T H E B O A R D

NEW MEMBERS



This month the Board has the pleasure of welcoming two new members.

We are so happy to have them on board and to see them at our events!

MEMBERSHIP FEE

By now, most of you will have received an email reminding you that it is time to renew your membership. We just want you to remember to **pay the fee by bank transfer** to **IF account** 1600 40 36631 (please, do NOT use VIPPS for this transaction). . **Please state your name.** Payments by bank go straight into the Styreweb system.

C O M I N G E V E N T S

SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

September 4

Odd Gunnar Skagestad: 'Russia after Putin'



Author and former Norwegian diplomat Odd Gunnar Skagestad will give a lecture based on his new book with the same title, in which he raises the question of the country Russia will be once its authoritarian and warlike leader leaves the arena. He will also discuss the potential consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine, for Russia, for Putin and for Putin's regime.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **September 4** at 18:45 for (19:00)

SIGN UP:

To Gunnel Anita Solheim, by email
as soon as possible.

For last minute cancellations, please call Gunnel Anita Solheim.

For more information, please see the August *Newsletter*.

ART COMMITTEE

Before Tomorrow: Astrup Fearnley Museum 30th Anniversary

September 14



The Art Committee has great pleasure in inviting you to the Astrup Fearnley Museum at Tjuvholmen. The museum itself is a piece of art, designed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano, who is probably most known for being the architect of the Pompidou Centre in Paris. The collection holds multiple works from several significant artists both Norwegian and international.

The celebration of the museum's anniversary is thus a tribute to the museum's founder who, with this generous gift, made his collection available to us all.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **September 14** at 11:45 (for 12:00)

SIGN UP: To Trudy Brand-Jacobsen by email. No later than **September 8**.

PRICE: **NOK 165.-** for the **guided tour** to be paid by bank to IF's account 1600.40.36631 or by VIPPS to 591747 as soon as your participation has been confirmed.

The **entrance fee** of **NOK 150.-** is to be paid at the venue. If you are a member of the National Gallery, you pay only 50% of the entrance fee. **Please state your name and the event in the payment transaction.**

For last-minute cancellation, please call Trudy.
Cancellations after the deadline and no-shows will be charged.

Trudy Brand-Jacobsen

DIPLOMATIC SALON

‘Art and Resilience’

A repeat Salon due to popular demand
at the Residence of the Ambassador of the United States to Norway

September 20 at 12:30



Blue Suede Shoes by Leikny Havik Skjærseth - *Romanoff's* by Leikny Havik Skjærseth

Jane Nathanson, wife of the American Ambassador to Norway, has graciously agreed to do a repeat Salon because the first one was fully booked within two hours. Mrs. Nathanson is a member of International Forum.

This event is fully booked.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit to Linderud Manor House

September 26 at 11:15

The Special Events Committee has great pleasure in inviting you to join us on a visit to Linderud Manor House (Linderud gård). This beautiful building in the east of Oslo is rightly called the pearl of Groruddalen (the Grorud valley). Its history goes back to the Middle Ages when it belonged to the Church and the Crown.

Mogens Lauritson bought the property in 1679. His son, Erich Mogenssøn, built the main building in 1713, and it was owned by the Monsen-Mathiesen family, who also owned Eidsvoll verk and other properties, for over 300 years. When Minister of Agriculture Christian Pierre Mathiesen (1903 –1904) died in 1953, the building became protected. Jørgen Mathiesen and his wife, Cecilie, were the last of the family to live in the house, and they did a lot of restoration work in the latter half of the 20th century. Since 2007, it has been part of the *Museums in Akershus*.

Linderud gård houses a wonderful collection of art works and furniture: The Mathiesen Collection (De Mathiesenske Samlinger). The estate also boasts one of Norway's best preserved historical gardens with elements from the Renaissance, the Baroque period, the tradition of English landscapes and functionalism.



We will enjoy a guided tour of this lovely Manor House. Afterwards, we may wander round outside and admire the beautiful garden.

Linderud gård is situated right beside Linderud Centre. In fact, this shopping centre was built on the grounds of the farm's barn.

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, **September 26** at 11:15 (for 11:30). Please be on time.

SIGN UP: To Rosemary Hauge by email, no later than **September 18**. Please sign up but pay only **after** you have received confirmation.

PRICE: **NOK 120,-** Please make your payment preferably by bank transfer to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please state the event and your name in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

PLACE: Linderud gård, Trondheimsveien 319, 0593 Oslo

LUNCH: There are several cafés in Linderud centre: Samsons, Espresso house and Subway.

TRANSPORT: Public transport is recommended.

T-bane Line 4 to Vestli or Line 5 *eastbound* to Vestli. Get off at Linderud station. Lines 4 and 5 use different routes but both stop at Linderud.

NB! Do not use Line 5 *Ringen* (it takes much longer).



A 10-minute walk from Linderud station to Linderud gård. Follow the signs to Linderud gård. See photo. Committee members will be standing along the way to guide you.

By bus: Green buses 380 and 390 from Oslo bus terminal stop at Linderudsletta. Takes approximately 20 minutes. You will see Linderud shopping centre on your right from the bus stop. Walk to the centre's outside parking area and follow the sign to Linderud Manor, a few minutes' walk.

By car: 2 hours free parking at Linderud shopping centre. If you need to stay longer you pay at the parking machine **when you leave**.

Directions for driving: Take Riksvei 4. Immediately after you pass Linderud centre (on your right), take the road to the right (signposted Tonsenhagen). Then turn first right to Linderud centre. From the parking area, follow the sign to Linderud gård.

Maximum number of participants is 20.

Guests are allowed if space is available. Cancellations after the deadline and no-shows will be charged.

For last-minute cancellations and questions, please contact Rosemary Hauge by email or by mobile phone.

OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING

October 9



‘Why do women live longer than men?’

Professor emerita Karen Helene Ørstavik from the Institute of Clinical Medicine at the University of Oslo will talk about this interesting and somewhat complicated topic.

DATE/TIME: Monday, **October 9** at 18:45 for (19:00)

SIGN UP: To Gunnel Anita Solheim, by email by **October 3**.

PRICE: NOK 105.- **Please sign up before you pay.** Make your payment **preferably** by **bank transfer** to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631 or by VIPPS 591747. No cash will be handled at the venue. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction (in the KID-number box for bank payments and in the dialogue box for VIPPS).

TRANSPORT: T-Bane 1 to Vinderen. Pay parking in the adjoining area until 20:00.

GUESTS: Guests are welcome if there is room. No-shows will be charged.

For last minute cancellations, please call Gunnel Anita Solheim on mobile phone.

IMPRESSIONS OF NORWAY

‘Nature’s vast Adventureland’

*Ireland’s outgoing Ambassador, H. E. **Keith McBean** bids farewell to a land he loved to explore.*

Four years in Norway have passed in the blink of an eye - it has been such a great posting. While the period was very impacted by the pandemic, there was also the positive of focusing more attention on discovering Norway, as alternative holiday destinations were not even an option for long periods of time.

What a country! It is clichéd to say that a posting has been a rich and rewarding experience but that accurately sums up my time in Oslo. From a professional perspective, there has been much going on and it’s been difficult to identify too many points of friction in Ireland’s excellent relationship with Norway. Ireland is fortunate to have thriving and active links in almost every sphere of the Embassy’s activity, and the two countries are working ever more closely together. A vibrant Irish community plays an important part in bringing a flavour of Ireland to Norway, through music, dance, and literature in particular.



Grytetippen, Senja



Senja



Senja – South



Besseggen, Jotunheimen



Gjende, Jotunheimen

In Ireland, we talk a lot about the Viking connection. Aside from more fearsome aspects of their reputation, we also know that the Vikings were great traders who did much to develop commerce in medieval Ireland. I think it is fair to say that Ireland also influenced Norway in this period. While many Vikings brought Christianity to Norway when they returned from Ireland, the connection through

the Saint Sunniva legend, an Irish princess, the heir to an Irish King, is perhaps one of the more important and enduring links. In more recent times culture, trade and perhaps most significantly shared values have drawn and continue to draw the two countries together.

I have found fascination in many aspects of Norwegian life. Much is said by expatriates about the length and darkness of the winters, admittedly trying at times, but all is rapidly forgiven once the days lengthen, and spring starts to appear.

I often describe Norway as a vast adventure playground, an aspect of Norway that will provide lasting memories. It will draw me back.

With its jaw-dropping magnificence and stark beauty, the Norwegian landscape continues to surprise and amaze, even after covering a lot of ground over the past years. Many gaps are still left to fill.



A trip from Kirkenes to Bergen on the Hurtigruten in the first summer was as spectacular as billed, helping to set the agenda for further explorations. A field visit organised by the MFA to Svalbard last autumn fulfilled a long-standing ambition, and a trip to Helgeland established it as an area to revisit.

Sunset at Tungeneset



Landscapes from Rondane Mountain Range

For someone naturally drawn to mountains and the rugged outdoors, my numerous visits to the dramatic Jotunheimen, as well as to Rondane, Senja, Utladalen, Hurrungane, Dovrefjell and most recently Romsdalsalpen were all strong and memorable experiences. Conditions have been challenging at times, with unpredictable weather, rough terrain, and exposed mountain ridges, but always hugely rewarding and incredibly scenic.

Membership in the DNT has been transformational in providing an infrastructure for travelling around. Norway can be very proud of such an excellent and accessible outdoors organisation.



Hurrungane



Romdalseggen



Sognefjell

The comfortable confines of the Irish Residence on Bygdøy have at times been substituted by the more basic attractions of DNT *hytter* (huts). The absence of running water and electricity, and an *utedo* (privy) some distance away provide less typical diplomatic accommodation but one which is compensated by a stunning environment and unrivalled views.



Utladalen

Closer to home, the versatile environment of the Oslo fjord and 'Marka' has been a constant, especially as a form of much-needed therapy during the

challenges of pandemic restrictions. With the privilege of living very close to the sea, daily immersion in the fjord have heightened the senses for the day to come, although I did chicken out during the mid-winter months.



Sunset at Huk

I leave with the intention of returning, and for that reason I have tried to avoid a sense of farewell.

A return will, however, be in a different context and not without a tinge of nostalgia for the honour of having been Ireland's Ambassador for four years, surrounded by such a warm and welcoming environment. Norway has of course been the primary focus, but the international community has been a great resource, filled by talented and versatile people, none less than that powerhouse of our lives here, Anita, whose friendship I greatly value.



Still evening at Huk

'God speed' and I leave you sadly and fondly with some of my favourite images of this unique country.

Tusen takk Norge!

REPORTS



AMBASSADORS ROUND TABLE 2023

'De-risking the Future'



Espen Barth Eide, Norway's Climate and Environment Minister; the Ambassador of United States, **Marc Nathanson**; the Ambassador of Britain, **Jan Thompson**; the Ambassador of Germany, Dr. **Detlef Wächter**, discuss how to manage geopolitical, economic and climate risks at the Ambassadors Roundtable.

Espen Barth Eide, Climate and Environment Minister of Norway

'Is this a risky world? Yes, by all means. We are in a peculiar international setting. It is not the Cold War, but it's not the 1990s either. We are putting brakes on this globalised world. The US has new policies for greening the economy. It's also about winning the competition for new technology, winning the competition with China. But China is a major renewable player. We buy our electric buses from China. The green transition is accelerating, moving from fossil to renewable, from linear to circular economy. The United States, the UK, Germany, and Norway realise that we cannot expect others to fix the polycrises we now face. We have to do it ourselves.'



Marc Nathanson, Ambassador of United States to Norway



'At this moment, our ground zero focus is on Ukraine. Our support to Ukraine is unprecedented. It includes weapons and diplomatic, financial, and humanitarian assistance, and also long-term commitment to helping the country reform its institutions in becoming more transparent. It would be a mistake to underestimate President Putin's fixation on and resolve in controlling Ukraine. He stakes everything on his belief that he can outlast the West. The American Presence

Post will open this October in Tromsø. It will be the northern-most US diplomatic post in the world, the only one in the Arctic circle.

Dr. Detlef Wächter, Ambassador of Germany

‘Europe will for a very long time be threatened by a Russia that is aggressive or unstable or both. Definitely, it will be an autocratic nuclear-armed neighbour. This is a bleak, but realistic outlook. But Russia’s aggression on Ukraine has intensified Germany and Norway’s relationship on energy, defence and business. Germany is energy-hungry; 70% of energy consumed is imported. Norwegian gas imports saved us from an energy meltdown. The new pipelines under construction now symbolise the close, long-term nature of our energy relationship. Unlike ships that are here today, gone tomorrow, pipelines last for decades. These hydrogen pipelines also symbolise both nations’ commitment to green transition and agreement on greater security for the region.’



Jan Thompson, Ambassador of the United Kingdom at the lectern and with the other panelists

Jan Thompson, Ambassador of the UK

‘Post-Brexit, UK-Norway relations have been going great guns, and like Germany, we are incredibly grateful for the energy security that Norway has provided us. The UK is now a global power in offshore wind. The four largest offshore wind farms in the world are off the shores of the UK. That wouldn’t have been possible without huge investment and expertise from Norwegian companies. The developing world feels that some of the richer countries have not lived up to their commitments on development, nor on climate change. They feel that the international system just isn’t really working for them anymore. That leads to a trust deficit, which can be exploited by malign actors. And we’re seeing that happen today.’



The fruit fiesta in the historic Green Room in the Gamle Rådhus for the mingling after the Ambassadors Roundtable.



Ambassadors of Colombia, the US, and the UAE * Mayor Robert Nordli with Anita Pratap



Mingling in the historic Green Room



Ambassadors of the US and Germany



GLOBAL OUTLOOK IN PICTURES



Anita Pratap, moderator



Anniken Huitfeldt, Norwegian Foreign Minister



Sandrine Dixon-Declève,
Co-President of Club of Rome,
spoke powerfully on climate
and social risks



Raja Mohan from Asia
Society Policy Institute
eloquently analysed the view of
the developing countries after
Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Maryna Saprykina from
Ukraine made an emotional
speech on life, women and
sustainable business in war
zones.

A significant part of Global Outlook is a panel discussion with experts. This year the panel included **Vidar Helgesen**, former Climate and Environment Minister, Norway and now the head of the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, **Sofie Høgestøl**, professor of law and leading television commentator on American politics and **Georg Riekeles** formerly with the European Commission and now with the European Policy Centre, Brussels. He is an expert on Nato, US-China relations, Big Tech and Artificial Intelligence.



Gamle Rådhus hall – the most beautiful room in Arendal

Photos:© **Jan Roger Janse**/NODE, Global Outlook; **Espen Grøstad**, Gamle Rådhus; U.S. Embassy Oslo

Anita Pratap

Cooking Group

Thursday, September 21

What a lovely start for the season we had at our the home of our Brazilian member. *Thank you, Dulce!*



Next gathering is going to take place at the home of Liss Laan, our group leader.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, **September 21** at 12:00

SIGN UP: To Liss Laan by September 18 by mobile phone.

PLACE:

Maximum participants: 10

Looking forward to meeting you again after the summer

Liss R. Laan

A R O U N D O S L O

SATURDAY OPERA AT THE OLD TOWN HALL

Christiania Torv 1
0157 Oslo

Welcome to the autumn season!

Lørdagsopera 9. september



Hedvig Haugenud

Magnus Ingemund Kjeletad

Stefan Ibsen Zlatanov

Stian Økland

Frøy Hovland Holtbakk

There will be opera of high quality and plenty of humour, high notes, sorrow drama, and despair!

The singers present their own performance, offering well-known arias and duets.

For more information, please see [Opera til folket](#)

KULTURKIRKEN JAKOB

MONTHLY JAZZINÉ

Sunday, September 17 at 14:00

Norsk Jazzorkester with Felix Peikli and Sisi Sumbundu

'The Ella Fitzgerald Songbook'



Musician, curator and producer Felix Peikli invites us to Kulturkirken Jakob for a monthly *jazziné* in one of Oslo's beautiful concert venues.

In 1955, Ella Fitzgerald's career moved to new heights when Marilyn Monroe got her a contract at Mocambo nightclub in Hollywood. She was the first black artist to sing on Mocambo's stage. She paved the way for other black artists. Today, Fitzgerald's voice is still loved across the globe, and she will for many remain the eternal Queen of Jazz.

Sisi Sumbundu, talented Norwegian vocalist, has participated in Afternoon Jazz and a host of TV programmes, mesmerising the audiences. She released her first album *Don't fall in love* in 2014, following her EP *Don't wanna go home* in 2013.

The Ella Fitzgerald Songbook is a tribute to artists such as Nina Simone, Sarah Vaughan and Eartha Kitt.

For more information and tickets, please click on the link [Afternoon Jazz: «The Ella Fitzgerald Songbook» - Kulturkirken Jakob](#)



INTERNATIONAL FORUM

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The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to
edit **all** material.

Dispatch:

September 1, 2023