



Why hold the European Conference at Ranum Efterskole College?



REC plays a considerable role in the small society since the school with its 450 students and more than 50 employees covers a wide area.

© Ranum Efterskole

In the previous newsletters we mentioned the folk highschool and continuation school concept, and in this newsletter we elaborate on the purpose of holding the conference at Ranum Efterskole College (REC).

As in scouting, they here engage in togetherness e.g. by working together across borders, culture, gender and background.

They cooperate on the various activities and participate in shared tasks such as

- getting hold of their own food at the buffet and returning plate and silverware to the self-service tray clearing trolley after having eaten;
- laying their own beds;
- contributing to EVERYONE'S good experience.

If the thought of participating in a conference held at a boarding school is a little scaring, we can reassure you that the facilities – although not similar to

those of a fine conference hotel in a big city – fully live up to the standards we want to offer.

There will be both single and double rooms, and if you want to share the room with more than one person, this is also possible. It may be a little scary to agree to share a room with one or more people not known to you beforehand – that's just another way of engaging in togetherness.

There are toilets and baths in connection with most rooms, and nobody need to queue up in the corridors to have a bath.

There are no elevators, however, a lift is available to make participation possible for wheel chair or walker users.

The school is situated in an area near lake and sea and other outdoor facilities. Thus you may take a brisk walk, a run or go for a dip in the clean water of the Liim Fiord each morning.

Focus on the 17 UN world goals

The inspiration sources of the conference are the UN world goals and the Danish folk high school concept that cover a great part of the conference themes: Togetherness, Inspiration and Sustainability.

We have succeeded in making the previous EU Commissioner for Environment, Connie Hedegaard, visit us on 31 July to make a presentation on environment and sustainability. Connie Hedegaard is still working with environment issues both internationally and nationally. At the conference she will touch on what is needed to make us live up to the ambitious world goals of the UN.

It is the aim of the group in charge of the conference to inspire participants to sustainable initiatives in their native countries. We need action! In the subsequent group discussions, we will therefore find specific areas in which we both individually and jointly can engage ourselves, e.g.:

- What can be done to convert the "green transition" into concrete action?



- How can we change our conduct as regards shopping, food waste, plastics, ways of meeting etc.?
- How can we increase recycling and thereby create more jobs?
- How can we encourage sex equality?

We will try to involve as many UN world goals as possible viewed from a practical perspective. The same applies to the activities offered at the conference. These activities will be presented in a later newsletter.

The folk high school concept provides the opportunity of cooperating in various ways and reaching new awareness. We can see what the students have done to implement world goal 14 (life in seas and

oceans) – they grow corals. We will experience, how waste is sorted, and how the school aims at cooking from local products in addition to many other aspects of "life on land" (world goal 15).

Look forward to an inspiring talk by Connie Hedegaard and the subsequent exciting group discussions and activities.

The tree of life – the symbol of togetherness and wisdom

The stylized tree at the right-hand side of the logo is Yggdrasil – the tree of life or world. Because of its symbolism it's the REC logo, and we are very pleased to be allowed to use it in our logo.

Yggdrasil is well-known in the Norse mythology, but also in other cultures where other myths may be attached. Yggdrasil stands in the middle of the world. The tree is always green, its crown reaches the heavens, and its fed from three wells in three different underworlds.

In Asgard, the home of the gods, Urd lives. This Norn knows everything about the fate of mankind and controls good and evil. The well of Urd is sacred – this is where the gods assemble for consultation and to administer justice. The well water is used to keep the crown of Yggdrasil green forever, and the dew dripping from the crown of the tree keeps plants around the tree fresh and green.

In the realm of man, Midgard, Mimir's well is found. From this we receive wisdom and intelligence, whereas the last well is connected to the land of the dead.

It is important that the tree is watered and that consultation and knowledge are fed to the tree to keep it green and vigorous forever. If not, it will wither and die and then comes Ragnarök and the tree is destroyed.

We wish for ISGF to remain well and viable through the meeting and holding of a conference at which we share knowledge and wisdom – and hope for this spirit to act as a red thread through action, words and tones during our stay at Ranum.

