

Dear List Members,

We are sending out this extraordinary newsletter to call for your help.

NSU is in danger! The Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR), our source of funding, has decided to cut our funding in total and announce that we from 2014 are run by NordForsk (www.nordforsk.org). The proposal for budget 2014 can be found on: www.norden.org/da/publikationer/publikationer/2013-914/

The consequence is not that we have no money next year, but it becomes a matter of applying for funding from NordForsk. The consequence is that the future of NSU – as we know it – is in jeopardy.

The background is a reduction in the budget of NMR of 5% in 2014 and another 5% in 2015. All activities in NMR face a reduction of 3.5 % next year with a remaining 15 MDKK to be found. We get 1.2 MDKK this year now taken out of the budget for 2014.

The arguments for moving us to NordForsk are two: (1) Money on administration can be saved and (2) our activities have similarities with NordForsk and positive outcome of letting them run us is expected. We in the board believe both assumptions are false.

(ad 1) No money can be saved; the consequence is the opposite. All work in NSU is based on unpaid, volunteering work. We pay the expenses (travel and accommodation) for coordinators, Arrkom and board. There is nothing to be saved here. If we have to apply for funding in NordForsk, which in return will have agendas we need to follow, the democracy and influence of the participants in NSU is undermined. The procedure for applying and the insecurity of the study circles will be complicated, perhaps impossible, within the present structure of NSU, where the general assembly at the summer is the highest authority. NordForsk cannot change our statutes but we may be forced to find a structure that can deal with this situation. A consequence is probably to leave more work in fewer hands which is not likely to be done unpaid. Thus, an outcome seems to be more administration and less activity – the opposite of the intentions of the new budget.

(ad 2) The assumption there is an overlap in activities of NSU and NordForsk is false. NSU hosts projects that are not institutional supported or related. Our study circles are cross-disciplinary and expected to be innovative and experimental thus providing a growth layer for new research projects in a Nordic context. As all the study circles meet annually, it also allows for a cross-fertilization between different research networks with an additional surplus value of Nordic collaboration and use of languages which differs from what otherwise is the case for research projects.

We consider this budget situation to be a fight for our existence and from the board we resist becoming part of NordForsk; alternatively we ask for a fixed amount of money for our activities specified in the budget of NordForsk. Being run by NordForsk represents a serious threat to the democratic organisation of NSU where everyone participating can have influence on the organization, as it will diminish the involvement of participants in NSU as well as how we understand NSU. No one but we can change NSU, but we can be forced into something that seriously undermines

what NSU is today.

Please help us by using all you influence and contacts everywhere. Final decision about next year's budget is made in October, but the lobby work must be done now and before important meetings in August.

We call for all of you to help us by using all your contacts – political and academic – in support of NSU.

Find and contact your national members of Nordic Council

<http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council/members-of-the-nordic-council>

Relevant ministers:

<http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers/council-of-ministers/nordic-council-of-ministers-for-education-and-research-mr-u>

and

<http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers/ministers-for-co-operation-mr-sam>

Ask anyone supporting NSU to send letters of support for us, and send them also yourself.

We need to keep track of who we are contacting so please fill in your name and the name of the person you contact in:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IqA4iVwafp75rrRYz7Y46JooIShpzhJ3cyxccdWagRg/edit>

Don't be afraid to contact someone that has already been contacted if you also know them – we need to create a pressure and show how strong the support for NSU is.

Remember, NSU is its participants. Everyone acts on behalf of NSU and everyone can make a difference!

Regards,

The Board of NSU

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