

Every Second Sunday News vol. 3

**Interview with President of CEI:
Birgitta Nordén
By Diana Fayed**

Birgitta Nordén joined CEI in 1994 when she attended her first conference in Aberdeen, Scotland. We asked Ms. Nordén about her first encounter with CEI: *“Together with a friend and colleague Ingrid Adolfsson, I was invited by a very action-oriented teacher colleague, namely Ruth Irvine from Northern Ireland. She had been visiting Lund with her students earlier, because my high school students by that time had exchanged lots of information with them through videoconferences and developed various environmental projects. Among other things, these projects were about how to increase biodiversity on the school ground and how to avoid air pollution and diminish the negative consequences of the climate change.”* Ms. Nordén continues: *“The reason why I joined was that I met so many inspiring teachers and engaged students from all around*

the world. Also the board members of the CEI were very welcoming and presented a very strong concept that I wanted to be a part of. This was something I wanted disseminate and offer young people and colleagues – not only in Sweden, but worldwide – to join.” Following her first encounter with CEI in 1994, Birgitta Nordén has continued her involvement in the organization. In 2000 she and the Swedish branch of CEI hosted The Global Environmental Youth Convention in cooperation with the International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics at Lund University. She recall this as an fantastic experience: *“It will always remind me of what can be accomplished if you build a strong team with supportive partners and committed teachers and students.”*

Ms. Nordén has been an active member of CEI for 22 years and is currently President of the organization, we have asked what have made her continue her involvement in CEI: *“The meetings and the exchange through the years with all energetic and positive people connected to the Caretakers of the Environment Interna-*

tional. The great network of the CEI is as an extended family, which is so encouraging when you have to deal with the urgent and hard tasks concerning environmental and sustainability issues.” As a part of the CEI family we have asked her why this “family” is important and she answered: *“Towards sustainability there are lots of challenges. Gathering on the CEI conferences, as in Aalborg 2016, shows how important it is for teachers and students to work together on environmental and sustainability challenges. Also, to take responsibility for whole processes designing activities for awareness raising and learning towards sustainable development. By arranging meetings with different actors in society holding various experiences and competence, a rewarding outcome of knowledge formation, new ideas and solutions could be reached.”* Lastly, we have asked Ms. Nordén if she as President of CEI has any words of encouragement for current and future Caretakers: *“Young people as you are important, your voices must be heard as you present your visions and when you discuss and share*

your arguments. Young people are to be recognized and listened to as you contribute to society in a respectful way. Communicating, learning and understanding collaboratively create a foundation for developing critical knowledge capabilities and competence to act democratically towards sustainability – locally and globally.”

This was Birgitta Nordén's story and experience with CEI. We would like to thank her for her time and her inspiring commitment to CEI.

The 2 degrees milestone **By Emma Laursen**

The discussion about whether climate change is real or not is surpassed – climate change is very *real*. Instead scientists and policymakers are discussing how much temperature rise we can tolerate.

Leaders of the world met back in December at United Nations Climate Change Conference 2015 to discuss how high a temperature rise we can tolerate. One of the outcomes of the conference was

the participants' agreeing that 2 degrees will change the world (Scheller, 2015). Therefore the 195 participating countries agreed to the Paris Agreement, and thereby committing to reducing their emission as a method to reducing greenhouse gas and thereby doing their best to keep global warming at a minimum or “well below 2 degrees C” (Paris Agreement).

Just three months after the Paris Agreement the average temperatures across the Northern Hemisphere briefly crossed 2 degrees Celsius above normal (Cronin, 2016).

Rising temperatures will affect and eventually destroy plant and animal habitats. It will result in more people being exposed to flooding and drought – leading to climate refugees.

A average rise at 2 degrees Celsius would for example result in the world's coral reefs to perish and the sea level rise more than two feet (Palmer, 2016).

At the 3 of March 2016 we reached that milestone, briefly –

only three months after a majority of the world's countries signed an agreement that the climate change should not exceed the 2 degrees milestone.

It seems to us that the climate change is in overdrive and it is time for all of us to act - as it has been for a long time.

Interview with former student: **Asbjørn Heby** **By Katrine Rose Jensen**

Asbjørn Heby (pictured below) is 26 years old and is currently studying a Master of Science in Politics and Administration at Aalborg University.



This interview with Asbjørn will be the first of many with former students of the CEI conferences. Asbjørn attended his first conference in Oregon, USA in 2005 (pictured below at a cultural presentation in 2005, dressed up as the Princess from one of H. C Andersen's Fairytales) - so he celebrated his 10 years anniversary with CEI last summer.



We have asked Asbjørn how he got involved with CEI: *"I first became a part of CEI, back in spring 2005. It was during a normal school class when Elisabeth Brun visited my class because she wanted to find new recruits for their team attending the CEI conference. I thought it sounded too good to be true, a trip to USA. The destination*

itself was the main goal at first, before I learned more about what CEI represents then it became much more than a journey to an interesting place."

After his first conference Asbjørn continued his involvement with CEI. He attended Poland (2006), Hong Kong (2007), Denmark as a Young Guide (2008) and finally Scotland (2009). We have asked Asbjørn about some of his favourite experiences with CEI: *"I've been lucky to attend the CEI conferences a few times. All the times have been amazing in each way. The best part is to see the people who also have been able to attend before - to meet old friends and family. There are so many moments from all of my times with CEI. Being a part of hosting the conference in Denmark in 2008 has to be one of the proudest. It's hard to single out specific moments, which I am really happy about without the context. From experiencing 4.th of July in USA to walking the streets of Hong Kong, they are all filled with extremely happy and joyful moments. However, what makes me truly happy when I look back, is that through CEI I found the best*

friend anyone could ever imagine, a friendship I know that will last till the day I die and beyond."

Asbjørn was a student at the CEI conferences for four years. We asked him how his involvement with CEI has affected his current life: *"It has affected me in more ways than I can possibly comprehend! First, it has contributed to how I am as a person. Being open, respectful and friendly towards strangers, from different cultures and backgrounds. Moreover, I have acquired skills, such as being able to speak in front of large crowds, without being nervous, which is very helpful in a world, where exams are important. More than this, I have also learned how to be and act better towards the environment, by doing the simple things. Turning off the lights when I leave the room, no standby lights on computer, Playstation etc. Sorting the trash, reuse bottles, plastic bags and so on."*

As earlier mentioned Asbjørn is currently studying Politics and Administration and we asked him if his involvement with CEI has influenced his educational choices: *"Perhaps, perhaps not. It's not clear to me, if CEI has affected me*

into choosing Politics and Administration. But being a part of CEI has surely helped me in my studies – and probably guided me in a certain direction”.

This was Asbjørn’s experience with CEI. We would like to thank him for taking time to telling his story.

Interview with Young Guide: Julie Valentin Tolbod
By Frederikke Ulnits

Julie Valentin Tolbod is another member of this year’s Young Guides Team. It is her first conference and she is very excited about being a part of such an amazing community. Julie is 17 years old and has formerly been involved in environmental activities. She has among other things written a project about global warming which she thought was very instructive and interesting. The first question we have asked her is where she heard about CEI and the conference: *“My discovery of CEI happened through Sophie Mortensen. I was a part of a group called ‘The Youth Council’, which is a group of voluntary youngsters who discuss and arrange social activities for other young people in Aalborg*

Municipality. It was here I got to know Sophie. Then one day she contacted me and asked if I was interested in this conference. It sounded amazing and I was definitely ready to join the conference this year!”

Since it is Julie’s first conference we thought it would be interesting to hear what she expects from a CEI conference: *“I am excited to learn from other people – and I am curious to see the different approaches to the conference theme. I wonder if people take theoretical approaches or if they will actually be able to combine it with a more practical approach”* she continues: *“Then of course I look forward to meet different cultures through different activities, to get more knowledge about the environment and to be challenged communicatively – as I expect to be as a Young Guide”.*

One of the great parts of CEI is that we are so many people with different backgrounds: age, culture, education, religion – who all unite for the greater good. This means that we always have space for new members, we asked Julie what she believes she will contribute with to this year’s conference

as a new member of the CEI family, she said: *“I have been a school council-chairperson for 3 years and then there was the Youth Council. Both things have made me used to speak with new people and in front of big audiences. I will bring my good mood too and contribute with great sense of organizing, which I think is important as a Young Guide to help make things go as smooth as possible”.*